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# Town of Whitefield Comprehensive Plan

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Proposed

# TOWN OF WHITEFIELD COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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## **1. Introduction**

Whitefield is the fastest growing town in Lincoln County. With a population of 2451 projected for 2005—an 18% increase since 1990—residents should consider what they would like their town to be in the future.

Whitefield's last town-approved comprehensive plan dates from 1977. The present plan updates data and documents the numerous changes, with the issues they raise, that have taken place in recent years, and proposes policies and strategies to address them.

The Whitefield Comprehensive Planning Committee was authorized by the Town's selectmen, and modest funding was approved at the 2003 Town Meeting. The committee was charged with taking stock (inventory) of town resources, issues, and trends in order to develop a current comprehensive plan that would be presented to the State and the residents of the town for approval in 2004/2005. The Committee chair was Charlene Donahue. Active committee members included Charles Acker, Alice Davis, David Dixon, Erik Ekholm, Libby Harmon, Herb Hartman, Pat Jennings, Ann Marie Maguire, Tony Marple, Lucy Martin, Sue McKeen (vice-chair), Marie Sacks, and Lester Sheaffer Jr. (secretary).

The purpose of the Comprehensive Planning Committee's work, in which many neighboring towns are presently engaged, is to develop a plan for guiding change within the community for the next ten to twenty years.

A survey sent by the committee to 1000 Whitefield residents in the summer of 2002 indicated that a majority of the 220 respondents favored maintaining the town's "rural character" in the face of rapidly growing population and increased development, both residential and commercial.

A bus tour taken by the planning committee in the fall of 2003 reacquainted members with the many beautiful stretches of woods and open fields that are an essential component of the town's "rural character" and make Whitefield a special place to live. At the same time, the numerous new homes that had sprouted along byways and back roads testified to the attractiveness of the town to a rapidly growing number of new residents.

The planning committee held meetings on the third Thursday of every month; hired facilitator Erik Hellsted from Planning Decisions of South Portland to advise and assist in the preparation of materials; and received invaluable assistance from the Sheepscot Valley Conservation Association, which prepared numerous maps, and the Lincoln County Planner, Bob Faunce, who prepared the transportation section. A newsletter was sent to residents in March 2004; presentations on the progress of the planning process and the plan itself were made to the selectmen on several occasions and at the 2003 and 2004 Town Meetings; a "visioning" session for residents was held in April, 2004; portions of the developing plan were sent electronically to a mailing list of interested parties; and extensive outreach efforts were made to inform residents of the plan's findings and solicit review and comment on the inventories and the committee's proposed goals and

strategies. "Neighborhood" discussion meetings were held in Coopers Mills and Kings Mills in July 2005; a public hearing was held on August 29, 2005 at the Town House. The developing draft plan and related information were available on the Internet and copies were also available at the Town Office. This process resulted in revisions to the plan intended to more accurately describe Whitefield's situation and reflect the sentiment of the community, before the plan was presented to the for approval by the Town's residents.

A comprehensive plan is only the first step of the planning process. In some cases, this plan recommends the establishment of several new local committees to implement the policies, gathering new information and refining actions to make them responsive to the needs and wishes of the community. Community involvement and fine- tuning of the plan are essential if it is to serve as an effective framework for local decisions.

While the plan recommends changes in ordinances that, if approved by the town's citizens, could affect what persons may do with their properties, the plan essentially stresses voluntary compliance and the use of incentives that would both benefit landowners and facilitate wise land use. The plan also calls for greater flexibility in ordinances governing land use to encourage open space preservation and village development. Any change to an existing ordinance or a new ordinance will need to be approved at Town Meeting.

The bulk of the committee's work, and a great deal of information about Whitefield, will be found in Appendix A, which contains the inventories of the eleven subject areas considered relevant to the town and its residents. Appendix B contains the maps cited in the inventories. Section 2 presents a history of the town; Section 3 elements of a vision of a future Whitefield; Section 4 the town's goals for each of the inventory subject areas, a discussion of the findings of the inventories contained in the Appendix, and a listing of the issues and implications raised by the findings; and Section 5 presents the strategies by which the town will address the issues presented in the preceding section.

## **2. History of Whitefield**

*(This is an abstract of A Brief History of Whitefield 1760-2004, available through the Whitefield Historical Society.)*

The Town of Whitefield, incorporated on June 19, 1809 as the 177<sup>th</sup> town in the Province of Maine, began as the western half of a frontier settlement known as Ballstown Plantation. The eastern half of the plantation had split off in 1807 as the Town of Jefferson. The land was owned by the Kennebec Purchase Company, one of a group of speculative land companies from Boston that laid claim to vast tracts of land in Maine in the eighteenth century.

Although the forests of Ballstown were logged for years, and white pine trees suitable for masts for the King's Navy were marked, settlement did not commence in earnest until after the end of the Indian Wars in 1760. Most settlers were not wealthy; they were looking only to establish homesteads for themselves and their children. Some settlers obtained legitimate grants from the proprietors, but many did not get legal title to their lands until after the courts had resolved difficulties with the Proprietors in 1815.

The political organization of the Ballstown Plantation is somewhat obscure. Apparently never incorporated under Massachusetts law, plantation meetings were not recorded until 1791. The plantation was named for Samuel Ball, who, with his son John, moved north from Alna in about 1770. Samuel and John mined limestone and ran a limestone kiln on the road to Weary Pond until about 1781 when they left town. John served in the Revolutionary War.

Not everyone came simply to establish a homestead. Some saw the wilderness as a place for gaining wealth from land speculation, lumber and mill operations. Mill sites on the Sheepscot River were actively sought out, not only by would-be settlers, but by investors, some of whom never lived here. The present three village areas of Kings Mills, North Whitefield, and Coopers Mills originated at the sites of the most important mills.

Great Falls (Kings Mills) was the first important mill location. A sawmill was erected in about 1774 by Jeremiah Norris. In the 1780s it became the property of Abraham Choate and his sons who added a grist mill. Benjamin King and his sons acquired the mills in 1801. The grist mill was used to generate electricity for the Ford brick house next to the mill until electric power came to Whitefield in the 1930s. The grist mill was destroyed by Hurricane Edna in 1954.

At Clary Lake, once Pleasant Pond, a mill complex built after 1791 provided a center for the North Whitefield settlement. At one time there were four mills at this site. At least two mills on the Sheepscot River at the foot of Grand Army Hill were operating in the early 1800s. Later a clothing mill, a carding mill and a shingle mill operated on this site. North Whitefield was known as Turner's Corner for many years.

The other main mill site was at Coopers Mills, north of where the road now crosses the river. The first mills, one on each side of the river, were built about 1804. The mill on the east side of the river was acquired by Jesse Cooper of Newcastle whose son, Leonard,

ran the mill and from whom the name of the village is derived.

Besides the Ball lime kiln on the Weary Pond Road, other early industries were granite mining and brick making from clay gathered from the river. A brickyard was located on the banks of the Sheepscot River in Kings Mills at the intersection of Head Tide and East River roads. Granite was used as the foundation stone for many houses. The Jewett Quarry located southeast of Weary Pond operated from 1850 to 1914. Blacksmith shops were scattered about town. Peter King, the son of the mill owner, was an ax grinder and had a shop near the mills. Gold was discovered on a farm on the Town House Road about 1881. Although a mine was dug and ore analyzed, it never provided the expected return and was abandoned. Gravel mining, originally carried out in small pits dug by hand, blossomed into a major industry, especially after World War II.

From earliest settlement and for at least 100 years, Kings Mills Village was the political center of the town. From Abraham Choate, Jr., in 1791 to Lore H. Ford in 1934, the town leadership always included a Choate/King/Ford family member. The political clout of the mill owners is apparent in the ruling of 1805 that no dam could ever be built upriver which blocked logs from reaching Kings Mills. There had been two mills about a mile upriver, the Turner/Preble mills dating to about 1775, which burned in 1803. These mills were never rebuilt after this ruling.

Their distance from the seat of government in Kings Mills prompted the residents of the Hunts Meadow and the Coopers Mills settlements to petition the state of Massachusetts in 1819 to redraw the northern boundary of Whitefield to make those settlements part of Malta (Windsor). The petition was opposed by the town and denied by the state. Again in 1843 when the Town House was built halfway between North Whitefield and Kings Mills, the Coopers Mills and Hunts Meadow people felt excluded from town meeting and voting. This building was relocated in 1989 to a site near the present school. It sits atop a new foundation where the Town Office is located. The 1843 structure now houses the Whitefield Historical Society. Voting is still held in the old Town House, although the town meeting has been held in the Whitefield Elementary School in North Whitefield for many years.

Many of our early settlers, especially around Kings Mills, could trace their roots to the Newburyport area where they or their parents had been touched by the preaching of the Reverend George Whitefield, an English evangelical Calvinistic minister who preached throughout the colonies from the 1730s to 1770. When the town was incorporated in 1809, it is likely that this group of settlers were instrumental in choosing a name that would honor George Whitefield. Although the First Baptist congregation built a meeting house in 1804, the location is not certain, probably at the corner of Hollywood Boulevard and Head Tide Road... It burned in 1868.

While the majority of Ballstown settlers came primarily from a Protestant and English heritage, Irish Catholic immigrants began arriving here about 1800. About 1820 Rev. Denis Ryan came to serve the Whitefield Irish community. The first Catholic Church, a wooden structure, was built in 1822 and named St. Denis to commemorate the French priests who first served the Catholic population of Maine. In the 1850s the present brick bell tower replaced the original wooden one. St. Denis Church is the only structure in

Whitefield listed in the National Register of Historic Places. In about 1873, a convent for the Sisters of Mercy was built across the street from the church. The nuns also ran a school, St. Denis Academy, and later an orphanage. The convent burned in 1922 and was rebuilt as the present Parish Hall.

About 115 Revolutionary War veterans were living in Ballstown by 1800. In the War of 1812 nearly 100 Whitefield residents served. This war had a lasting effect on Whitefield's economy because it devastated the maritime activity of the port of Wiscasset through which Whitefield lumber and wood products were shipped to overseas markets. Whitefield sent 117 men to the Civil War. The Spanish American War found several adventurous Whitefield men volunteering for action. Whitefield has also contributed its share of citizens to World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, and now the Iraq War. A Memorial was erected in Kings Mills in front of the Whitefield Union Church after World War II that listed all those who had served and died in that war. In 1993, a Memorial Park was established behind the Town House that honors the veterans of all wars.

While social interactions in Whitefield have traditionally revolved around church, neighborhood and farm interests, after the Civil War, benevolent societies aimed at improving local life sprang up. The Union veterans of the Civil War established an organization known as the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR). In about 1869, about 40 Whitefield veterans formed the Erskine Post #24 of the GAR. The GAR Hall in North Whitefield was completed in 1885. It also housed a free high school and has been important in the social and intellectual life of the town. The Whitefield Grange #101 was organized in Kings Mills in 1875. The Arlington Grange #528, was chartered in 1914 and met in North Whitefield in the GAR Hall, which it acquired in 1919. The hall is now known as the Arlington Grange Hall. In 1969, the Whitefield Grange merged with the Arlington Grange which continues to have suppers and programs today.

In 1899, the Whitefield Fish and Game Club was established as a conservation society pledged to care for the fish and game in the river and forests. The club joined forces with the Whitefield Grange to build the Whitefield Union Hall in Kings Mills in 1900. The Fish and Game Club was famous for its annual game suppers. It continued in operation until 1972.

Women also carried out benevolent activities. The Helping Hand Society at the Whitefield Union Church, organized in 1909, raised money by ice cream socials and "fancy" work (crocheting, hand-sewn articles, embroidery, etc.) The Willing Workers Club, organized in the Plains section of town in 1904 by eight women, raised enough money by sewing quilts and aprons to start a Sunday School, and eventually built a two-story chapel. After the fire departments were organized in the 1940s, the Women's Auxiliaries held suppers and fairs to raise money.

The Gov. Kavanaugh Council, Knights of Columbus, was founded in 1909 at St. Denis Church. In 1956 a hall was built just below the church on Grand Army Road where game suppers were held. It was moved in 1998 to North Whitefield Village where it was remodeled into the Country Farm Restaurant. The Lions Club was organized in 1954 and is located in a remodeled schoolhouse in Coopers Mills. It provides a scholarship to



Whitefield students and contributes to many community projects. The latest organization is the group known as the Senior Men who have generously responded to requests for help.

There are also three volunteer fire departments, one for each village. The North Whitefield Fire Volunteer Department was organized in 1944, the Kings Mills Department in 1947. After a devastating fire which wiped out the general store and post office in North Whitefield Village in 1948, a volunteer fire department was also organized in Coopers Mills in the 1950s.

The health needs of the community were met by home remedies and common sense. There are no doctors listed in the Ballstown records. In the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, doctors were available from Gardiner, Jefferson, Richmond and Alna, as well as in Whitefield. Among the beloved country doctors were A. R. G. Smith and Joseph E. Odiorne. In 1923, a dedicated local nurse, Katherine Morse, began a hospital at her home on the Town House Road, known as the Cottage Hospital. It was mainly for obstetrics and minor injuries and occasionally housed a few patients with mental illness. An addition was built for an operating (labor) room. In the 1990s the addition was detached and moved back from the road to house the Sheepscot Brewery, which is now located on Hollywood Boulevard.

Perhaps nothing demonstrates the influence of outside forces on Whitefield's evolution more than the changes in population over the years since the earliest settlement, shown in the graph below. After about 60 years of rapid in-migration, Whitefield experienced a decline in population which continued for nearly 100 years. The Erie Canal and the mechanization of farm equipment favored large western farms and drove farmers to leave their farms all over New England. Some Whitefield farmers went west; others left for industrial centers where they could earn a living in the textile and paper mills or shoe factories. Even the Gold Rush claimed a few. The Whitefield farmers who remained survived by adding a variety of activities that brought in needed cash: wood products, such as barrels and shingles; leather tanning and shoe making. This diversification brought about a change in rural architecture, from free-standing houses and barns to the more efficient connected farmhouses that accommodated a variety of activities.

The arrival of the Narrow Gauge Railroad (the Wiscasset and Quebec, then the Wiscasset, Waterville and Farmington) in 1894 provided a welcome boon to the Whitefield economy. Lumber, milk and other farm products, barrels and eels trapped in the river were shipped to Wiscasset and then on to larger markets. Although heavily supported by the town, the railroad was always in financial trouble. The finishing blow was a derailment just below Whitefield station in Kings Mills in 1933. Although the tracks were removed to pay debtors, the route of the train through Whitefield is still visible from the surviving rail bed, now used by snowmobilers.

During the depression and after World War II, a slow trickle of people began to return to Whitefield. Some became dairy or poultry farmers. The broiler industry collapsed in the 1970s. Only several dairy farms exist today.

The sharp rise in population which began in 1970 coincides with the movement of "back-to-the-land" city dwellers, who began buying and restoring Whitefield's abandoned

farmhouses or who built houses on large tracts of former farm or forest land. Many of these were non-farmers whose work took them out of town but who maintained some relationship with the land. Some became sustenance farmers and developed crafts as a way of earning a living. The population rise over the last decade or so coincides with the continuing decline of farming and rapidly rising land values which have encouraged people with large holdings to sell their land. More and more farmland is being sold off in small parcels and fewer and fewer people earn their living in Whitefield. Social patterns are no longer dependent on neighborhood or farm interests. Not since the beginning of settlement, when the aboriginal forest was cut down and land cleared for farming, has there been such a potential for profound changes in the physical and social landscape of the town.

### **3. *ELEMENTS OF A VISION FOR WHITEFIELD***

Residents who responded to queries about why they moved to Whitefield, or what they wanted to change as little as possible, cited maintaining the community's "rural character" as the future brings continued population growth, social change, and development. "Rural character" is not defined in this plan, and may have different meanings for different people, whether they are descendants of original settlers, multi-generational residents, or newcomers. The traditional economic bases of "rural character", agriculture and forestry, have declined in importance. Whitefield has more houses, more cultural and socio-economic diversity, more traffic, and higher property taxes, to name a few changes. Ironically "rural character", in Whitefield's case, also means affordable property, in an attractive and friendly "rural" setting, the very reasons for the rapid increase in population and social change that most threaten to change the community. Where "rural character" once, years ago, may have meant stability and a great degree of individual independence with few restrictions on land use, change has occurred. As population and development increase controls are increasingly necessary to protect the health and safety of the community's citizens, and to attempt to conserve those elements that the citizens value.

The elements listed below represent the Comprehensive Planning Committee members' impressions of the most salient features of Whitefield's "rural character".

- A sense of community fostered through a broad understanding of and respect for the town's history, its diverse population; support for the elementary school and its programs, community suppers and fund raising; the Town Meeting; restoration of old structures; locally-produced crafts, artwork, and food; places where people can gather such as Uncas Farm, the Union Hall, the school;
- neighborliness;
- farms and farmlands, with barns and silos, gardens, fields of corn and hay, glimpses of horses, cows, sheep, llamas;
- concentrated residential and commercial development in traditional "village" areas: North Whitefield, Coopers Mills, and along Route 17;
- unpolluted lakes, wetlands, rivers, and streams, habitats for various species and

accessible to the public for recreation;

- scenic views of open space —fields and forest—and residential and commercial development sensitive to the value of such open space to the community;
- woods harboring songbirds, game birds, predators and large and small game--deer, moose, fox, raccoon;
- opportunities for various dispersed and organized forms of outdoor recreation—hunting, fishing, cross-country skiing, walking, bicycling, horseback riding, snowmobiling, boating, golf, swimming, soccer, baseball;
- country roads, some unpaved, with undeveloped corridors, light traffic, low speeds;
- a variety of small businesses, many of which are home-based, that provide employment and income to residents of Whitefield without significant negative impact on its scenic, rural, and environmental qualities.
- an efficient and effective municipal government mindful of the need for limited property taxation, meeting the needs of residents.

#### **4. Goals and Policies**

Whitefield's comprehensive planning effort has produced extensive "inventories" of eleven subject areas relative to the future of the town and its residents: population and demographics; land use; local economy; housing; transportation; public services and facilities; recreational resources; cultural resources; historic and archeological resources; natural resources; and fiscal capacity. These inventories with their figures and tables contain a significant amount of information about the town and comprise Appendix A. The maps cited in the inventories comprise Appendix B.

This section contains the goal(s) for each inventory subject, presents a condensed discussion of the findings and issues, and proposes policies under which the issues will be addressed. Strategies intended to implement the policies appear in the next section.

##### **1. Population and Demographics**

Goal: Anticipate the rapid population growth of the community and develop policies and strategies that best serve this increasing population while preserving the community's rural, scenic, and natural qualities.

Discussion: As the fastest growing town in Lincoln County, Whitefield's population has doubled since 1970. A continuing high rate of growth accompanied by pressures for residential and service development is projected for the future [see Whitefield maps showing past and projected residential structures, Appendix B]. A decrease in family size accentuates the need for additional dwellings. As younger families move to the community in search of inexpensive housing, there will be an increase in the need for expanded school facilities. With the aging of baby boomers, there has been a dramatic increase in the 45-65 year-old group, suggesting a need for housing and facilities suitable for senior citizens in the coming decades.

Our survey has shown that high among the values which our citizens desire to conserve are Whitefield's rural character, scenic vistas, and natural resources. Our expanding population will bring increasing pressures for development with the threats of urban sprawl, increasing traffic, impairment of scenic vistas and natural resources, and demands upon the town for greater services.

Policy: Policies and implementation strategies to respond to this general goal are detailed in the sections that follow.

## **2. Land Use**

Goal: Provide for orderly development while preserving open space, retaining forestry and agriculture, and protecting critical resources such as aquifers and environmentally sensitive areas.

Discussion: With significant residential growth, driven by relatively affordable land and low taxes, the rural character of Whitefield is being altered. Most residential development tends to occur along roadways, but as the corridors become lined with houses, subdivisions on interior lands will encroach upon important wildlife habitat. To date there are relatively few subdivisions, but given projected growth rates, improved roads and available land, more subdivisions are likely. Currently, there is a minimum lot size requirement of 1.5 acres along with road frontage requirements. At present, Whitefield's Subdivision Ordinance does not make allowances for alternative housing patterns that would promote open space, conserve rural character, and allow flexibility of development.

Gravel mining is a significant economic activity in Whitefield. Compliance with standards for reclamation and buffer zones has not been consistent.

A large aquifer, a major source of drinking water and vulnerable to pollution, runs through Whitefield from north to south under sand and gravel deposits.

There is no definition for types of commercial development that differentiates between high and low impact on the environment or residential values; such development can occur practically anywhere in the town.

Whitefield requires property owners to file a Notice to Build form prior to construction. This notice, approved by the Planning Board and the Code Enforcement Officer can assist the Board of Selectmen in assessing property in a timely and equitable manner and to monitor what type of development is occurring. Compliance with the requirement to file a NTB is estimated to be about 75%.

### Policies:

1. The Town shall endeavor to manage land use and development through incentives, tax increment financing (TIF), and voluntary cooperation, without the use of zoning.
2. The Town shall make use of ordinances where necessary to promote orderly development, protect aquifers, prevent pollution of air and water, and ensure public safety.

3. The Town shall designate “preferred use areas” for purposes such as village development, business development, and protection of natural resources.

[“Preferred use areas” are not districts designated for legal restrictions on land use, but are rather areas for which voluntary cooperation, incentives, grants, etc., might be sought to achieve the goals of the comprehensive plan.]

### **3. Local Economy**

Goal: Encourage economic growth and opportunity consistent with the town's rural character and scenic values.

Discussion: Despite Whitefield's rural setting, we are becoming a suburb of Augusta and the Mid-Coast area, with accompanying changes in employment profiles and commuting patterns. Once a farming community, the number of self-sustaining farms has diminished dramatically. Residential development will continue to compete with natural resource-based activities, and transportation corridors will become more heavily used by commuters.

Whitefield has a large number of gravel deposits, a resource being extracted for use in construction throughout the region. Gravel transportation can accelerate the degradation of the town's transportation network.

Whitefield has a number of small and home-based businesses, including garden farms, home professional businesses, and seasonal occupations that are critical to the livelihood of the town.

Some areas are more suitable for business development than others. There is currently some clustering of businesses in Coopers Mills and North Whitefield. Except for limitations imposed by Shoreland Zoning there is little to preclude any type of business from locating anywhere in town.

While Whitefield receives economic development representation from the Lincoln County Economic Development Office, our town has no economic development strategy, local program, or organization to promote economic activity in the community.

#### Policies:

1. The Town shall encourage the continuation of rural and resource-based activities such as forestry and farming.
2. The Town shall create a comprehensive approach to economic development which complements the town's rural character.
3. The Town shall attract and encourage appropriate business development.

### **4. Housing**

Goal: Encourage the development of new housing and fuller use of existing housing to

accommodate a growing and aging population

Discussion: While Lincoln County's growth rate from 1990 to 2000 in single family dwellings was 19%, Whitefield's increase in single family homes was 33%. Affordability of housing appears to be a significant factor driving rapid population growth. Twenty-four percent of new dwellings were mobile homes. While there was an increase in population, household size declined, indicating a further requirement for single-family homes in the future. The town's aging population will result in an increasing demand for senior, assisted and multifamily living situations.

At present there are no building codes to ensure the safety of new dwellings.

Policies:

1. The Town shall create greater flexibility in lot size requirements in order to preserve open space while minimizing sprawl, and permitting village and multi-unit development.
2. The Town shall encourage full utilization of existing housing such as use of accessory units.
3. The Town shall encourage the development of housing suitable for senior citizens such as multi-unit development and assisted living facilities.
4. The Town shall ensure that new housing meets the minimum requirements for safety.

**5. Transportation**

Goal: Improve the safety, efficiency, and scenic character of the town's transportation network.

Discussion: Increased development will lead to increased traffic on Whitefield's roadways, and road improvements may be associated with increased speed. The Town lacks standards for new and existing roads and bridges that both ensure quality and safety and protect scenic values. The Town does not have a long-range plan for bridge replacement and roadway improvement.

Policies:

1. The Town shall continue to improve the quality of its transportation network.
2. The Town shall strive to improve the safety and usability of our roads and corridors.
3. The Town shall strive to retain the scenic character of our transportation network.

**6. Public Services and Facilities**

Goal: Provide services and facilities that are effective, efficient, and adequate to meet the needs of the citizens of Whitefield.

Discussion: The existing town office is inadequate for the amount of business currently conducted, and service demands will increase with the expanding population. There is no

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adequate and comfortable space for meetings of boards and commissions. Space and security provisions for town records are inadequate for future needs. There is no long-range plan for financing, maintaining, and/or replacing town facilities. There is no capital improvement fund setting aside money for future capital improvements.

The town water supply was found to contain bacteria and may need to be treated or another source may need to be developed. Requirements for trash disposal may increase as the population grows.

The Coopers Mills Dam is in poor condition and hinders fish passage.

The year 2009 is the Bicentennial Year for Whitefield; a warrant article was passed in 2004 to start a fund to pay for a celebration.

The school requires capital improvements and additional space may be required in the future to meet anticipated population growth.

There is no transportation for secondary school students, a factor in school dropout.

### Policies:

1. The Town shall plan for the long-term maintenance, development, or replacement of facilities.
2. The Town shall safeguard the Sheepscot River as a major resource for Atlantic salmon preservation and for recreation.
3. The Town shall ensure the safety of the town water supply.
4. The Town shall support the Whitefield Bicentennial Celebration.

### **Fire and Rescue Services:**

Discussion: From north to south the town of Whitefield is 15 miles long. This extensive range is served by three separate fire associations. Converting to a single, municipal department would lead to administrative efficiencies, but would add a problem of timely emergency response. Moreover, consolidation could add significantly to the tax burden due to the loss of private fund-raising efforts currently carried out separately by each association.

While there is a First Responder unit, the Town does not have its own rescue service.

The Town does not have a long-range plan for apparatus and equipment replacement.

Personal and business insurance costs of Whitefield citizens could be lower with a better Insurance Standards Organization (ISO) rating.

The major problems facing the volunteer fire associations are the aging of volunteers and the difficulties in recruiting, training, and retaining personnel.

Policies:

1. The Town shall continue to support three local fire associations, as well as a rescue service.
2. For the fire services, the Town shall develop a long-range plan for equipment replacement, maintenance of services, and personnel replacement.

**7. Recreational Resources**

Goal: Enhance recreational opportunities for Whitefield residents.

Discussion: As the town grows and becomes more suburban, the demand for higher-intensity recreational areas (ball fields, gymnasiums, etc.) will likely increase. Existing resources are limited and could be overwhelmed. Lower-intensity recreation areas (for hiking, hunting, etc.) tend to be privately-owned. Projected growth and changing community values (contrary to a strong tradition of public access to private land) could reduce available private land or access to resources in the future. Access points to the Sheepscot River are limited and lack appropriate parking. Walking, biking, and running on town roads are becoming more dangerous as volume and speed of traffic increases. ATVs are often unwelcome on private land.

Snowmobile registration revenues are used by the local snowmobile club to maintain trails without consideration of other recreational opportunities that could be supported.

Policies:

1. The Town shall improve its ability to respond to changing recreation needs.
2. The cost and funding of facilities shall be determined on an individual project basis.
3. The Town shall increase the number and improve the quality of recreational facilities that it provides.
4. The Town shall support efforts to keep as much private land open and accessible to the public as is possible.

**8. Cultural Resources**

Goal: Ensure that Whitefield residents have access to cultural events, programs, and facilities.

Discussion: The Whitefield Elementary School is the only public facility generally available for group activities. The lack of a public library limits access to library services, including computer access and training. There are no public programs targeting the needs of our growing number of senior citizens.

Policies:

1. The Town shall provide adequate and appropriate space for cultural activities.



2. The Town shall support the efforts of private organizations that provide cultural programs and opportunities to Whitefield residents.

### **9. Historic and Archaeological Resources**

Goal: Ensure the appreciation of our historical heritage by Whitefield residents through education, and preservation of and access to historical features such as houses, cemeteries, and records.

Discussion: Whitefield, with an interesting colonial and post-colonial past, has a large number of historically significant structures, and records. Residents tend to have a limited appreciation of local history. The only structure presently on the National Register of Historic Places is the St. Denis church. There is no survey of other buildings in the community that might qualify for the National Register of Historical Places. Several important cemeteries are in disrepair; there is no plan for prioritizing and funding restoration of town-owned cemeteries. In addition there are potential archaeological sites that have not been investigated. Historical town records are subject to deterioration because of insufficient storage facilities.

Policies:

1. The Town shall preserve important historic sites and archaeological resources.
2. Whitefield shall seek to restore the Town's cemeteries.
3. The Town shall ensure the preservation of historic records.

### **10. Natural Resources**

Goal: Preserve for future generations the quality of our town's natural resources, including water bodies, aquifers, wetlands, wildlife habitat, and agricultural and forest resources.

Discussion: Rapidly changing land use, resulting from population pressures and development, could threaten our natural resources including water, fragile soils, and wildlife. Water quality impacts the genetically distinct and naturally reproducing Atlantic salmon population of the Sheepscot River. (The Atlantic salmon is on the federal Endangered Species list.) We have a 300 foot shoreland buffer zone, but compliance with this in the future is not ensured. As road corridor sites for development become scarce, development into the backland will become more common, intruding on large blocks of wildlife habitat. The town's aquifers are vulnerable to pollution that could make drinking water unsafe. While restrictions apply at present, there is no means under existing ordinances to prohibit permanent structures on sites that could be inundated by a 100-year flood. Whitefield does not belong to the Federal Flood Insurance Program.

Policies:

1. The Town shall develop plans to guide protection of our natural resources.
2. The Town shall enforce existing ordinances established for the protection of natural resources and modify them as needed.

3. The Town shall identify and preserve areas with important wildlife habitat.
4. The Town shall update or expand development performance standards with regard to environmental protection.
5. The Town shall support and advance agriculture and forestry.

#### **11. Fiscal Capacity**

Goal: Maintain the Town's fiscal soundness and provide a stable, fair and equitable level of funding for education and municipal services.

Discussion: Some forms of State aid are based on valuation. Whitefield's valuation is substantially less than the State's valuation which is based on current property sales information. Given the same level of municipal income and expenditures, increased local valuation would result in a lower tax (mill) rate.

Noncompliance with the Town's required Notice to Build hampers fair and timely adjustment of valuations.

#### Policies:

1. The Town shall ensure that Whitefield's real estate valuation is fair, timely, and exceeds the State's minimum assessment ratio of 70%.
2. The Town shall ensure that the provision of municipal and education services is as cost-efficient as possible.

## ***5. Implementation Strategies***

The following strategies are designed to implement the policies that address the issues for each Inventory subject as summarized in the preceding chapter and stated more fully in Appendix A.

### **1. Population and Demographics**

Policies: Policies and implementation strategies to respond to this general goal are detailed in the sections that follow.

### **2. Land Use**

Policies:

1. The town shall endeavor to manage land use and development through incentives, tax increment financing (TIF), and voluntary cooperation, without the use of zoning.

Strategies:

A. The Planning Board should propose amendments to ordinances pertaining to minimum lot size, road frontage, and subdivisions to permit cluster development and multi-family units, i.e., smaller lot sizes and/or greater density in a portion of the tract in exchange for permanent dedication of a portion of the land for open space. *Seek town approval in 2007.*

B. The Planning Board will consider the recommendations of the Conservation Commission and propose amendments to ordinances to allow for voluntary transfer or purchase of development rights so that environmentally sensitive areas can be protected in exchange for smaller lot size/higher density or other features beneficial to the developer at development locations. *Seek town approval in 2007/2008.*

C. The Planning Board, following the recommendations of the Economic Development Committee, should draft a business development ordinance to identify incentives such as smaller lot size, tax abatement, or technical assistance in buffering, etc., in exchange for businesses locating in areas designated as most appropriate for business development; create appropriate formal definitions of different types of businesses including home-based, commercial activities, and development in view of anticipated significant impacts on traffic levels or environmental and scenic values; and establish "good neighbor" performance standards such as buffering, setback, noise, lighting, and parking requirements for businesses to minimize adverse impact on the town's rural character. *Seek town approval in 2008.*

## Proposed

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2. The Town shall make use of ordinances where necessary to promote orderly development, protect aquifers, prevent pollution of air and water and ensure public safety.

### Strategies:

A. The Planning Board should ensure that the Town's requirement to file a Notice to Build form is widely understood and is fully complied with by residents, and that the Selectmen are made aware of approved NTBs to permit fair and timely evaluation of new construction for assessment purposes and to monitor rates and types of development. *Ongoing.*

B. The Planning Board should review all land use ordinances to ensure that: (1) performance standards are adequate to serve this policy; and (2) definitions are clear, precise, and easily understood. *If amendments are needed seek town approval in 2007 or concurrently with other amendments to ordinances.*

C. The Conservation Committee should propose to the Planning Board performance standards for aquifer protection. *Seek town approval in 2008.*

D. The Code Enforcement Officer should enforce all ordinances fully and consistently. *Ongoing oversight and support by Selectmen and Planning Board.*

3. The Town shall designate "preferred use areas" for purposes such as village development, business development, and protection of natural resources

### Strategies:

A. The Conservation Committee should identify and recommend (2007) to the Planning Board those areas of the town that are environmentally sensitive, or have unique rural or scenic qualities that should have the highest priority for conservation or protection. *Seek town approval in 2008, if needed.*

B. The Economic Development Committee should recommend (2007) to the Planning Board for designation "business development" overlay areas in which incentives for locating certain types of business would be present. *Seek town approval in 2008.*

C. The Planning Board should define and propose the reduction of the minimum lot size requirements in "village" areas. *Seek town approval in 2008.*

## **3. Local Economy**

### Policies:

1. The Town shall encourage the continuation of home-based businesses and rural and resource-based economic activities such as forestry and farming.

### Strategies:

## Proposed

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A. The Board of Assessors (Selectmen) should support and encourage landowners to preserve use of their open land by means of the Farmland Current Use, Tree Growth Current Use, and Open Space Current Use Tax Programs by increasing awareness of the tax incentives these programs include. *Ongoing.*

2. The town shall create a comprehensive approach to economic development that complements the town's rural character.

### Strategies:

A. The Selectmen should appoint an Economic Development Committee to: develop a plan for: encouraging appropriate business development; ensuring a healthy future for farming and forestry; and identifying benefits and costs of different industries and propose strategies for minimizing costs. *Seek town approval in 2006.*

3. The Town shall attract and encourage appropriate business development.

### Strategies:

A. The Selectmen, on advice from the Economic Development Committee, should create a formal Tax Increment Financing (TIF) policy as well as other economic development incentives to help attract and locate appropriate businesses. *Seek town approval in 2008.*

B. The Planning Board should encourage home-based business where there will be minimal impact on road traffic and environmental and scenic values, and should develop strategies to encourage the location of commercial enterprises in "preferred use" districts when there will be significant impact on traffic as well as on environmental and scenic values. *Seek town approval in 2008.*

## **4. Housing**

### Policies:

1. The Town shall create greater flexibility in lot size requirements in order to preserve open space and minimize sprawl, permit village and multi-unit development, and encourage fuller use of existing structures.

### Strategies:

Refer to the strategies in Section 2, Land Use.

2. The Town shall encourage the development of housing suitable for senior citizens such as multi-unit development and assisted living facilities.

Strategy:

The Planning Board should review ordinances to ensure that they allow construction of assisted-living and multi-family living situations suitable for senior citizens. If they do not, amendments should be proposed. *Seek town approval in 2008, if necessary.*

**5. Transportation**

Policies:

1. The Town shall continue to improve the quality of its transportation network

Strategies:

A. The Selectmen should appoint a Transportation Advisory Committee to conduct research and survey local opinion, and advise them and the Road Commissioner on implementation of these strategies. *2006*

B. The Transportation Advisory Committee should recommend to the Selectmen a maintenance and improvement plan that monitors the condition of roads, bridges, and culverts and schedules improvements so that these costs have minimal impact on the town's budget. *2007.*

C. The Selectmen should adopt minimum standards for acceptance of new roads (sight distances for driveways, drainage provisions, width standards) to avoid financial liability in upgrades, and develop criteria for when and if gravel roads should be paved. *2007.*

D. The Selectmen should work with neighboring communities to resolve regional transportation issues. *Ongoing.*

E. The Transportation Advisory Committee should explore methods to encourage car-pooling and other measures to reduce commuter traffic. *2007.*

2. The Town shall strive to improve the safety and usability of our roads and corridors.

Strategies:

A. The Road Commissioner should monitor the accident rates at intersections and other locations and recommend to the Selectmen improvement of those considered most dangerous. *Ongoing*

B. The Selectmen, on advice of the Road Commissioner and the Transportation Advisory Committee, should consider guidelines for curb cuts and other safety-related issues and adopt standards, perhaps similar to those of the State Department of Transportation. *2007.*

C. In conjunction with road improvements, the Selectmen should seek to expand

the shoulders of important roads to allow safe pedestrian and bicycle use. *Ongoing.*

D. As roads improvements are made, the Selectmen should provide limited parking within the right-of-way as needed (e.g., for canoe access to the Sheepscot River). *Ongoing.*

3. The town shall strive to retain the scenic character of our transportation network.

Strategy:

The Transportation Advisory Committee, in conjunction with the Conservation Committee and other groups, should identify scenic vistas of high value, trees, and other features that should be preserved, and monitor proposed road improvements to ensure that they do not significantly change the rural character of the town's transportation corridors. *Ongoing.*

## **6. Public Services and Facilities**

Policies:

1. The Town shall plan for the maintenance, development, or replacement of facilities over the long range.

Strategies

A. The Selectmen should create a planning process to examine the need for new facilities (town office, School Superintendent's office, community center, fire station, water supply) and appropriate use(s) for the property recently acquired by the town adjacent to the location of the current town office. *2007*

B. The Selectmen should review and refine this plan to create a long-range capital improvement plan for the maintenance and/or replacement of facilities. *2007.*

C. Table 6.7 presents a draft major capital improvement plan. The Selectmen should review and refine such a plan, create a capital improvement fund, and set aside funds for capital improvements as they become necessary. *Seek town approval 2007.*

D. The Town office staff, in conjunction with the Whitefield Historical Society, should continue the town records restoration project, which should include an inventory of records, provision for safe and secure storage facilities, and records and minutes of meetings backup. *Ongoing.*

E. The Selectmen should continue the town's participation in the Lincoln County Recycling Program. *Ongoing.*

F. The Selectmen should explore ways to collaborate with other towns to reduce

costs while improving the quality of goods and services. *Ongoing.*

2. The Town shall safeguard the Sheepscot River as a major resource for Atlantic salmon preservation and for recreation.

Strategy:

A. The Selectmen should support the Sheepscot Valley Conservation Association in its effort to protect the river system. *Ongoing.*

B. The Conservation Committee should work with the SVCA, other committees, and groups to study the environmental costs and benefits of removal of the Coopers Mills Dam. *2007.*

3. The Town shall ensure the safety of the town water supply.

Strategy:

The Selectmen, with the School Committee, should monitor the bacterial count of the school well and, if needed, consider acquiring a treatment system or finding another source of water. *Ongoing.*

4. The Selectmen shall continue town support for the Whitefield Bicentennial Celebration

Strategy:

The Selectmen should continue to support contributions of town funds to the fund for the 2009 celebration. *Seek town support for funding 2006, 2007, 2008.*

5. The School Committee shall continue to work with the Selectmen, Budget Committee, and School Union to contain the escalating costs of operating the school.

Strategies:

The School Committee, Selectmen, and School Union should contain costs by:

(1) Establishing a long-range plan for capital improvements, replacement of buses, technological, office and classroom equipment, furnishings, books and supplies; *2007*

(2) Using bidding, locked-in pricing, and regional cooperative efforts to reduce costs. *Ongoing.*

6. The Town shall continue to support three local fire associations, as well as a rescue service.

Strategies:



## Proposed

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A. The Selectmen should support the three local fire associations in their fundraising activities. *Ongoing.*

B. The Selectmen, in conjunction with officers of the fire associations, should study the feasibility of a new fire/rescue station as part of a new town office complex (see Strategy 6.1.A). *2007.*

C. The Selectmen should support funding for the Whitefield Rescue Service. *Ongoing.*

2. The Town shall develop a long-range plan for equipment replacement, maintenance of services, and adequate personnel for the fire services.

### Strategies:

A. The fire departments should identify current deficiencies in the fire services and initiate processes to upgrade existing capabilities to achieve a lower ISO rating. *2007.*

B. The fire associations should explore and recommend additional benefits and other measures to recruit new fire and rescue personnel and ensure that their training meets state and federal requirements. *Ongoing.*

## **7. Recreational Resources**

### Policies:

1. The Town shall improve its ability to respond to the changing recreational needs of its citizens.

### Strategies:

A. The Selectmen should appoint a Recreation Committee to monitor recreation resources, ensure their maintenance, and facilitate discussion with recreational organizations and landowners. *2006.*

B. The Recreation Committee should develop a recreation plan, with recommendations to the Selectmen. *2007.*

2. The cost and funding of facilities shall be determined on an individual project basis. *Ongoing.*

3. The Town shall increase the number and improve the quality of recreational facilities that it provides.

### Strategies:

A. The Recreation Committee should seek funding for recreational facility development and programs from fees, grants, donations, etc. *Ongoing.*

B. The Recreation Committee should work with the Lions Club and collaborate with others to ensure the recreational plan for the town property on Route 17, the Harold B. Olsen Recreational Area, complements the changing recreational needs of the town. *2006,2007.*

C. The town property on Townhouse Road should be used as a starting point for developing, in conjunction with private landowners, a multi-use trail network.

D. The Recreation Committee should seek ways to better utilize our network of lakes, ponds, and rivers by providing access and parks. *Ongoing.*

E. The Selectmen should support the Town's acquisition of public access rights at the western end of Clary Lake for waterfowl hunting, fishing, and skating. *Ongoing.*

4. The Town shall encourage keeping as much private land open and accessible to the public as possible.

Strategies:

A. The Recreation Committee should encourage private landowners to make land accessible by developing, in conjunction with landowners, ground rules for public access and conditions for continued availability, educational materials, etc., and should coordinate with the Whitefield Athletic Association, Lions Club, Snowmobile Club, and others to expand formal access, provide signage and post ground rules and conditions of use. *Ongoing.*

## **8. Cultural Resources**

Policies:

1. The Town shall provide adequate and appropriate space for cultural activities.

Strategy:

The Selectmen should study the feasibility of a town center that would include the town office, a community center, and other facilities for cultural and recreational activities (see Strategy 6.1.A). *2007.*

2. The Town shall support the efforts of private organizations that provide cultural programs and opportunities to Whitefield residents.

Strategy:

The Selectmen should provide space in Town mailings to residents for cultural organizations to describe their activities. *Ongoing.*

## **9. Historic and Archaeological Resources**

### **Policies:**

1. The town shall preserve important historic sites and archaeological resources.

### **Strategies:**

The Selectmen should continue to support the Whitefield Historical Society in its efforts to implement these policies. The Society, in conjunction with appropriate experts, should supervise the identification, mapping, evaluation, marking and cataloging of historical sites, and education of landowners and the general public about these sites through programs and publications. Activities would include:

- (1). A survey to identify structures and sites of historic significance; *2007*
- (2). Education of current landowners about the historic significance of their properties and encouragement to protect historic features; *Ongoing*.
- (3). In conjunction with the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, investigation of potential archeological sites on the shores of Clary Lake and the Sheepscot River. *Ongoing*.

2. Whitefield shall seek to restore Town-owned cemeteries.

### **Strategy:**

The Selectmen should earmark a percentage of cemetery trust funds to restore old, town-owned cemeteries and encourage volunteer efforts to support the project. *Ongoing*.

3. The Town shall ensure the preservation of its historic records.

### **Strategies:**

A. See Strategy 6.1.D.

B.. The Historical Society should develop guidelines for public use of historic records to be recommended to the Selectmen. *2006*.

## **10. Natural Resources**

### **Policies:**

1. The Town shall develop plans to guide protection of our natural resources.

### **Strategies:**

A. The Selectmen should appoint a Conservation Committee to monitor and advocate for protection of natural resources. *Ongoing*.

B. The Conservation Committee should propose a Natural Resources Protection Plan to the Selectmen, seek grants, coordinate with other organizations, and develop educational opportunities for promoting the wise use of natural resources, and advise the Selectmen and Planning Board. *Ongoing*.

2. The Town shall enforce existing ordinances established to ensure the protection of natural resources and modify them as needed.

Strategies:

A. See Section 2, Land Use, Strategy 2.2.B.

3. The town shall identify and preserve areas with important wildlife habitat.

Strategies:

A. The Conservation Committee should identify the most important wildlife habitat areas as wildlife “preferred use” areas; work with landowners to seek voluntary protection of important wildlife areas; and together with the Selectmen explore strategies such as grants for purchase and transfer of development rights to preserve important habitat areas. *Ongoing*

4. The Town shall update or expand development performance standards with regard to environmental protection.

Strategies:

A. See Section 2, Land Use, Strategies 2. A-D and 3. A, B.

B The Planning Board should consider a Flood Plain Ordinance and prepare recommendations for or against joining a National Flood Insurance Program. *2007*.

5. The Town shall support and advance agriculture and forestry.

Strategies: See Section 3, Local Economy.

## **11. Fiscal Capacity**

Policies:

1. The Town shall ensure that Whitefield's real estate valuation is fair, timely, and within State conditions.

Strategies:

A. The Selectmen (Board of Assessors) should review the assessment process and ensure timely and equitable valuation that at least exceeds the State’s minimum assessment ratio of 70%. *Ongoing*

B. The Selectmen should ensure compliance with the Town's required Notice to Build and be made aware by the Planning Board of NTBs as they are processed. (see Strategy 2.2.A) *Ongoing*

2. The Town shall ensure that the provision of municipal and education services is as cost-efficient as possible.

Strategies:

A. Selectmen, School Committee, and Budget Committee should continue their efforts to efficiently manage budgets. *Ongoing*.

B. The Selectmen should study how current and projected development patterns are likely to impact the town's budgets for education and general services and make necessary adjustments in planning (See Public Services and Facilities Section). *Ongoing*

## APPENDIX A: INVENTORIES

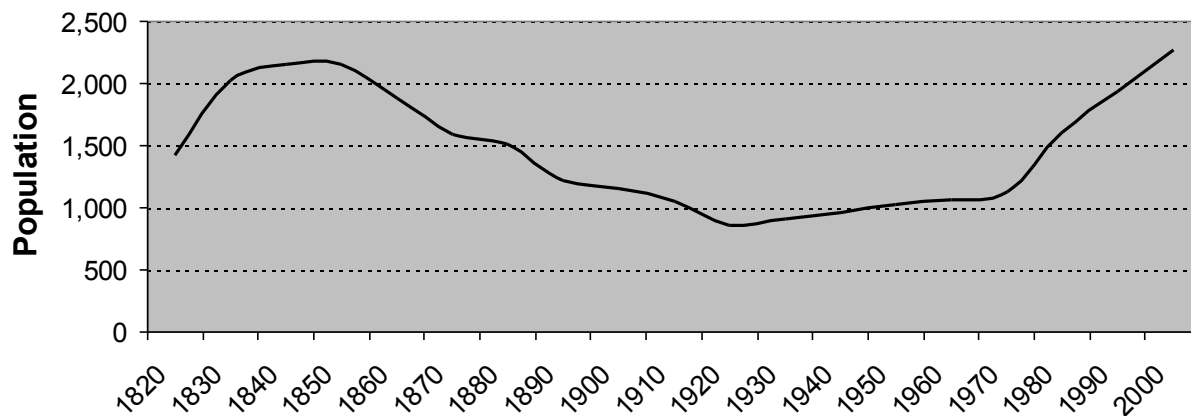
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## A-1. Population and Demographics

### Population Change

In the last 30 years, our town's population has doubled in size, from 1,131 residents in 1970 to a new high of 2,273 in 2000.

**Figure 1.1. Whitefield's Historical Population Change**



Source: Maine State Planning Office

The prior peak of population was in the 1840's when more than 2,150 people lived in town. A period of steady decline bottomed out in the 1920's when the town was less than half its original size (see the Historical Section for a discussion of possible reasons). This was followed by steady, moderate increase until the mid-70's when a period of rapid population growth began. Between 1990 and 2000 Whitefield grew by 18%. (See Table 1.1) Alna and Windsor grew at similar rates and Jefferson also had significant growth, but less than ours. Pittston and Chelsea grew modestly, while the population of the nearest urban area, Augusta, declined by 13%. In the 1990's Whitefield grew faster than Lincoln County as a whole (11%); the State grew by only 4%.

**Table 1.1. Population Change, 1970 - 2000**

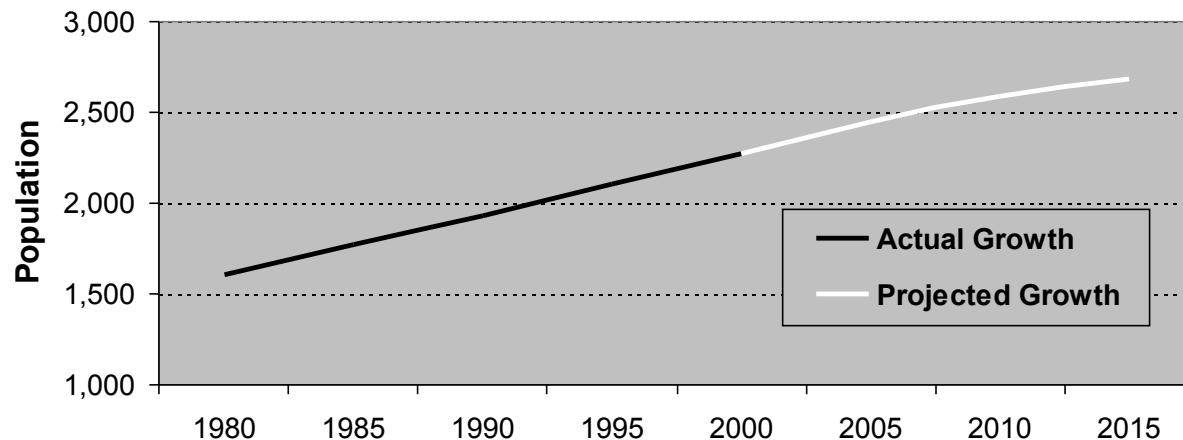
	1970	1980	1990	2000	% Change, 1990 – 2000
<b>Whitefield</b>	1,131	1,606	1,932	2,273	18%
Alna	315	425	573	675	18%
Windsor	1,097	1,702	1,895	2,204	16%
Jefferson	1,242	1,616	2,111	2,388	13%
Lincoln County	20,537	25,691	30,357	33,616	11%
Maine	992,048	1,124,660	1,227,928	1,274,923	4%
Pittston		2,267	2,440	2,548	4%
Chelsea	2,095	2,522	2,483	2,559	3%
Augusta		21,819	21,325	18,560	-13%

Source: US Census

The Maine State Planning Office projects that Whitefield's population will reach 2,451

residents in 2005, 2,590 residents in 2010, and 2,685 residents in 2015 (Figure 1.2). While this rate is slightly lower than our experience in the last three decades, it still represents a significant amount of change.

**Figure 1.2. Projected Population Change**



Source: US Census, Maine State Planning Office

This projected growth rate is higher than surrounding communities, the county, and the State as a whole. Moreover, there are reasons to believe that even these projections may underestimate actual growth; SPO uses a formula applicable to the State in general, while there are specific factors such as the new Augusta bridge connecting to I-95 and the Wiscasset By-Pass that may contribute to the rate of growth. In any event, as a result of continuing population increase, the town will be under pressure to expand services and facilities.

### Household Change

In 2000, the number of households in Whitefield reached 849, an increase of 34% since 1990. This rate of growth is significantly larger than surrounding communities, Lincoln County, and the State as a whole (Table 1.2.).

**Table 1.2. Household Change, 1980 - 2000**

	1980	1990	2000	% Change 1990 – 2000
<b>Whitefield</b>	492	635	849	34%
Windsor	553	685	846	24%
Jefferson	542	760	945	24%
Pittston	712	840	1,010	20%
Lincoln County	9,494	11,889	14,158	19%
Alna	not available	226	266	18%
Chelsea	690	831	959	15%
Maine	395,184	465,729	518,200	11%
Augusta	8,405	8,889	8,565	-3.6%

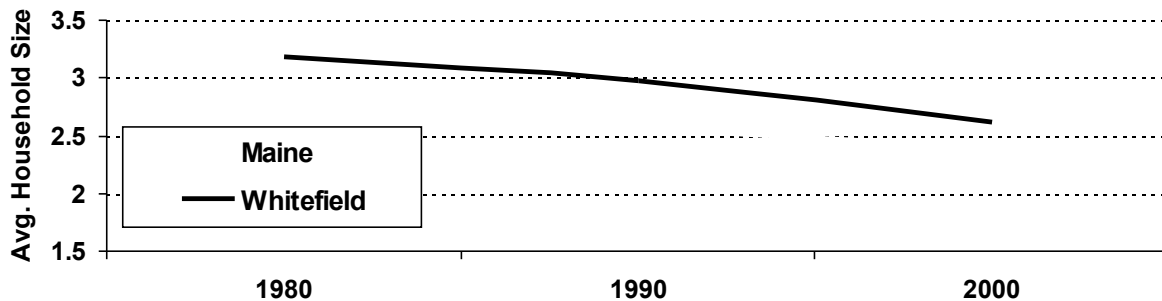
Source: US Census

While our town's population grew by 18%, the number of households increased by 34%.



This means that there is a significant decrease in the average size of households. There were 3.18 persons per household in 1980 and 2.62 persons per household in 2000. This decrease for Whitefield matches State and nation-wide trends (Figure 1.3.), attributed to increasing life expectancy, postponement of child-rearing by young families and increase in the number of single-parent households.

**Figure 1.3. Average Household Size**



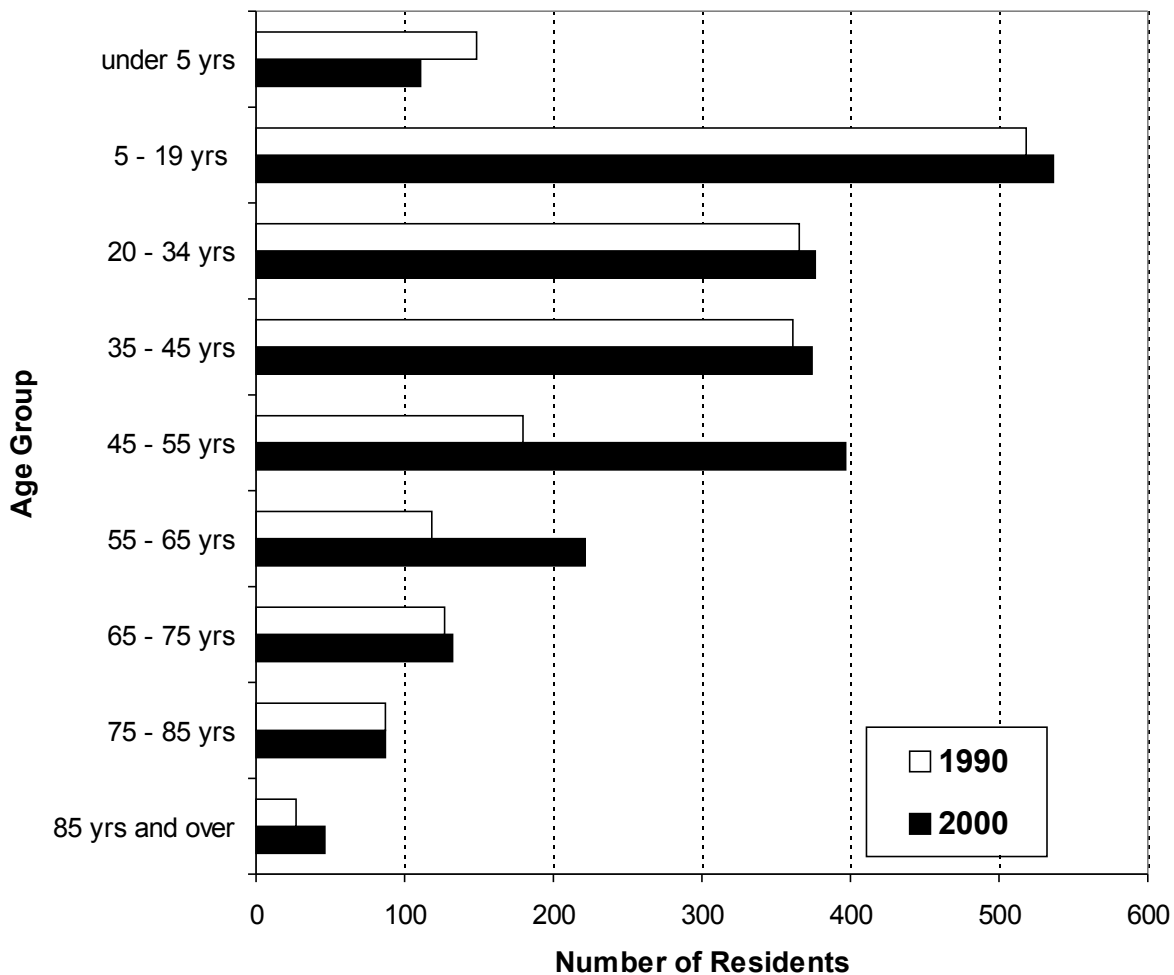
This trend towards smaller households is expected to continue and has significant implications for the future of the community. If we project that our average household size will reach 2.30 persons by 2015, 144 new households would be required for the present number of 2,273 residents. The 412 additional residents projected by the State Planning Office would occupy 180 more new households. In other words, to house the present population plus the projected 412 additional residents by 2015, we will have to add 324 new households. To meet this demand at present, it is probable that some old houses are being converted into 2- or 3-unit buildings.

### Age

Whitefield residents are growing older. Between 1990 and 2000, the town's median age increased from 33.6 years to 37.8 years. The number of children under 20 years of age remained about the same, the number of residents 65 and older has increased slightly, but the number of residents between 45 and 64 has roughly doubled. This is consistent with national trends, as the "baby boom" generation becomes middle aged.

Despite the aging population, in 2000 Whitefield was considerably younger than the county and State: Lincoln county median age: 42.6; State of Maine median age: 38.6 years. There are two factors which will probably keep Whitefield's age below the county and State averages:

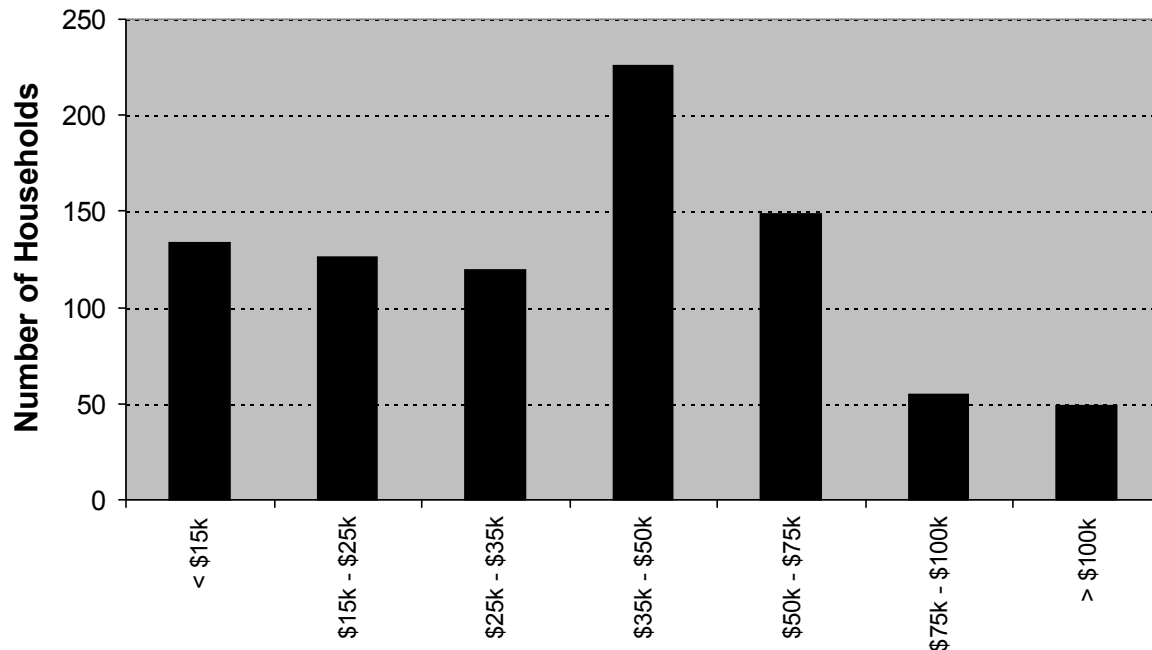
- our town is attractive to younger couples and families looking to buy reasonably-priced land within commuting distance from Bath-Brunswick, the Midcoast, and Augusta; and
- the lack of elderly housing or services makes Whitefield less attractive to those in the highest age brackets.

**Figure 1.4. Age of Residents****Occupation**

In 2000, 1,170 residents over 15 years old reported being employed in various occupations. Nearly 40% of these were employed in managerial or professional positions. Approximately 20% of these were employed in the traditional blue-collar trades (operators, fabricators, repair, laborers, precision production, etc.). More than 15% were employed in service-oriented jobs. Less than three percent were employed in forestry, farming, and fishing. This occupational pattern reflects the national trend away from an agricultural-rural base of employment.

**Income**

In 1999, Whitefield's median household income was \$38,477. This was about the same median as for Lincoln County as a whole, and slightly more than that of the State.

**Figure 1.5. Whitefield Household Income, 1999**

Source: US Census

Sources of income for Whitefield households differed somewhat from those for the County and State. More than three-quarters of Whitefield households had wage/salary income, compared with 70% for the County. Significantly fewer Whitefield households relied on Social Security income (24% for the town compared to 33% for the County) and on retirement income (17% for the town compared to 21% for the County). This suggests that Whitefield residents are more likely to be actively employed than residents of Lincoln County as a whole.

In 1999, 277 Whitefield residents lived below the poverty level (13% of all residents). This was significantly higher than the County's rate (7%), although it was close to the State as a whole (11%) as well as to rates for Augusta and Chelsea. The communities of Jefferson, Pittston, Windsor, and Alna had significantly lower poverty levels.

In 2003, 80 Whitefield households, (161 total residents) relied on the State's food stamp program for support. In addition, 17 households (41 persons) received Temporary Aid for Needy Families. These levels are roughly in line with rates for surrounding communities when adjusted for population size.

### **Issues and Implications**

1. Whitefield's population is growing rapidly, doubling since 1970. Since 1990, Whitefield has been the fastest growing town in the county. This rapid growth is projected to continue as families in the Augusta and Midcoast areas seek to live in peaceful, inexpensive communities.

2. The number of households is growing faster than the population, a change associated with decrease in average household sizes. In order to house the projected 412 new residents projected by 2015, Whitefield will have to create an additional 324 households.

3. Whitefield is a relatively young community. But there has been a dramatic increase in the proportion of persons 45 to 65 years of age from 1990 to 2000. This reflects the movement of younger and middle-aged persons into town and possibly elderly needing assisted living moving out of town. These demographic trends are expected to continue in the future.

4. Despite Whitefield's generally good income level (we are slightly below Lincoln County, but higher than the State), There is a significant number of residents living below the poverty line.

5. When compared with neighboring towns, the County and the State, Whitefield:

- Has a lower percentage of seasonal housing (7%). (Maine average 16%, Lincoln County 28%; Jefferson 30%). We are not a vacation town.
- Is tied with Windsor in rate of population growth (101%) during 1970-2000.
  - (Maine 29%; Lincoln County 64%; Jefferson 92%; Chelsea 86%)
- Has the greatest projected rate of population growth (18%) 2000-2015 (Maine 4% Lincoln County 11%; Jefferson 13%; Windsor 16%; Chelsea 3%)
- Has the greatest percentage of mobile homes (24%). (Maine 12%; Lincoln County 15%; Jefferson 16%)\*
- Has the lowest per capita (\$16.4K) income. (US \$21.5K; Maine \$19.5 K; Lincoln County \$20.7K; Jefferson \$20.3K; Windsor \$16.7K)\*\*
- Has the greatest increase in the percentage (33%) of single family homes 1990-2002 (Lincoln County 19%; Jefferson 15%)\*
- Has the greatest percentage of houses built (28.2%) between 1990-2000. (Jefferson 21.5%; Windsor 25.9%; Chelsea 24.1%)\*
- Has the most unemployment (4.6%) in 2000 (Maine 3.5%; Jefferson 2.4%; Windsor 3.0%; Chelsea 2.9%)\*\*
- Has the lowest median age (33.6 yrs) in 2000. (Lincoln County 42.6 yrs; Jefferson 40.1 yrs) Whitefield has seen a remarkable increase in the number of persons aged 45-65 from 1990 to 2000.
- Has population forecasts of: 2, 451 in 2005: 2,590 in 2010: and 2,685 in 2015.

\*See Housing Section

\*\*See Economy Section

6. Whitefield's rapid growth, along with decreasing household size, which is expected to continue in the next one or two decades, suggests that many new homes will be built, resulting in greater pressure for services, such as paving of roads, snow plowing, fire

protection, perhaps even for public transportation.

7. More land will be developed, with more roadside driveway (curb) cuts, possibly subdivisions. The rural character of Whitefield, its natural undeveloped land and scenic views could be threatened if there are not incentives for preservation of open space.

8. A significant proportion of new dwellings will be mobile homes with a resulting mix of lower valuations and tax base. Town services may have to be curtailed, or tax rates will need to be increased.

9. Though Whitefield's population will probably continue to be younger than surrounding towns, our present age bulge will be in the 60 to 80 year old range. Thought should be given to providing for elder housing, possibly subsidized, and to assisted living facilities and services appropriate for elderly citizens, such as community shopping and recreational facilities within walking distances. The alternative to this is a large exodus of elderly people.

10. Though the expansion of the school-age population will be comparable to that in the State and surrounding communities, there will be an increase in the number of school children, requiring more classrooms and facilities. It is probable that computer-based education will be more expensive. This will create another demand on the tax base.

## **A-2. Land Use**

### **Pattern of Development**

Whitefield is a rural community with roots in agriculture and forestry. Many townspeople still view the town as a rural, farming community despite the fact that there are only a handful of full time farmers and that 75% of the residents work out of town. Farming currently occurs primarily in the North Whitefield section of town down both sides of the Sheepscot River. These areas are also considered some of the most scenic in town. Numerous residents have small home sidelines in the agricultural field – growing vegetables, blueberries, maple syrup, honey bees, eggs, sheep, beef and flowers, Christmas trees and herbs as well as backyard gardens. There are also a number of tree farms and land that is harvested for timber without being formally part of Tree Growth or Tree Farming programs.

The extreme southern tip of town is being heavily mined for gravel over an aquifer unconnected to the primary aquifers running through town. There is another large pit located just north of the school on the Vigue Road with many smaller pits scattered down the center of town from north to south.

Housing is almost strictly single family homes widely spaced from one another with the exception of the three small “village” areas—Coopers Mills, North Whitefield, Kings Mills-- where houses are more closely spaced. New houses are going in on single lots, rarely as developments. The most concentrated building activity is occurring on the middle section of Hunts Meadow Road near Trainor Corner. The northern and middle sections of town are seeing more new houses than the southern section. The lakes, ponds, rivers, and streams are relatively undeveloped with only a few camps along the southern shore of Clary Lake that have been there for years. Most houses are set well back from the other bodies of water.

Small businesses are also becoming more prevalent as the community grows. These are interspersed amid the houses as owners frequently start businesses adjacent to their homes. The business development is more concentrated in the northern part of town. Route 17 has many business endeavors, as does Route 218. Whitefield is home to numerous artists and artisans who value the tranquility of the rural countryside and draw inspiration from it. On the flip side, the town currently has a problem with unlicensed junkyards.

Coopers Mills in the northeastern most corner has the Sheepscot Valley Health Center, Country Manor Nursing Home, Country Corners store, Elmer’s Barn, a post office, and fire station. North Whitefield in the middle of town contains the school, post office, fire station, Town Office, North Whitefield Superette, Uncas Farms Organic and Natural Foods Store, Hairworks, Country Farms Restaurant, the salt shed, recycling center, and two churches. In the southern part of town Kings Mills has a fire station, golf course, Union Hall, and church.

### **Land Use Ordinances**

Whitefield has developed the following ordinances related to land use:

- The *Minimum Lot Size Ordinance* applies to all seasonal, permanent or mobile housing, and other physical structures such as barns or garages.
  - Dwellings constructed prior to 1976 are exempt from the ordinance.
  - Dwellings must be situated on no less than 1.5 acres of land.
  - A new structure must be no less than 70 feet from the center of a traveled way, and 15 feet from the nearest property line.
  - The Planning Board has the discretion to waive aspects of this ordinance if it determines that conditions create a hardship on the property owner.
- The ***Development Ordinance*** regulates commercial, residential, industrial, and institutional development. It requires the developer to participate in a pre-application conference with the Planning Board and present a general overview of the project. The Planning Board reviews a checklist of information listed in the ordinance and determines what is pertinent to the proposed development. The developer is required to provide this information in the formal application submitted to the Planning Board along with a fee. The Planning Board decides whether a public hearing is necessary; however, a hearing is required if 15 or more persons petition the Planning Board for one. The Planning Board must make its decision within 60 days of receiving the application or within 30 days of the date of the public hearing. In making its decision, the Planning Board may require certain modifications to the plan to fulfill the requirements of the minimum lot size ordinance and to preserve the public health of the residents or the natural beauty of the town.
- The ***Shoreland Use Regulation Ordinance*** is used in conjunction with the State of Maine guidelines for Municipal Shoreland and Zoning Ordinances. The stricter requirements of either regulation will apply. The ordinance applies to development within 300 feet of the high water mark of any wetland, pond, river, or salt water body as defined by the Resource Protection District, the General Development District, or the Limited Residential-Recreational District, as described in the ordinance. The Planning Board may waive certain provisions of this ordinance for reasons of hardship, subject to the approval of the State Planning Office.
  - The ordinance sets standards for sedimentation control.
  - Logging within 25 feet of a high water mark is prohibited.
  - No structure shall be erected closer than 200 feet of a shoreland zone.
  - Frontage in the shoreland zone will not be less than 150 feet.
  - No structure will be less than 25 feet from the nearest property line.
  - The ordinance sets standards for septic design, and generally requires that a septic tank be located no less than 200 feet from the high water mark.
  - The ordinance sets standards for forest management activities and timber harvesting.
- The ***Manufactured Housing Ordinance*** establishes minimum requirements for manufactured housing units.
  - The unit must have a minimum width of 14' and a minimum of 750 square feet of living space.
  - The unit must meet federal and state building code requirements, have

residential siding, and must be placed on a permanent foundation with the appropriate skirting.

- The ***Subdivision Ordinance*** applicability is defined by the Maine Revised Statutes Title 30, Section 4956. Subdivisions exceeding 5 units are classified as major, fewer than five units minor. The applicant must attend a pre-application conference with the Planning Board and present a description of the plan along with sketch plans.
  - For a minor subdivision, the applicant shall submit two original plans, tax plan numbers, verification of title, a description of the proposed sewage system(s), soil surveys, contour lines, and various other information required by the ordinance. The Planning Board will make an on-site inspection of the property. The applicant then submits a formal application within six months, along with a fee. When a completed application has been accepted, the Planning Board organizes a public hearing and notifies interested parties, e.g., the school and fire department. The information from these steps will be incorporated in a final plan, which The Planning Board must act on within 60 days, or 30 days of a public hearing
  - A major subdivision requires, in addition to the requirements of a minor subdivision, road design specifications, approval by the Maine Department of Environmental protection and the Maine Department of Human Services, a soil and sedimentation control plan, possible open space requirements and, depending on location, notification of municipal officers of neighboring towns.
- The ***Wireless Communications Facilities Ordinance*** bans the installation of large lattice-tower facilities, but would allow monopole and other telecommunication facilities designed with the least intrusive impact. Facilities with low visual impact would have priority over those with high impact. In cases where no alternatives exist, standard monopole towers would be permitted. The ordinance also provides for public input concerning the siting and type of facility.
- The ***Septage and Residuals Ordinance*** applies to utilization, land application, storage, processing or other handling of residuals (including sewage sludge) or septage within Whitefield. While the State has the capacity to regulate land spreading of residuals and septage, it is limited in its ability to closely monitor the spreading operations in individual towns. This ordinance provides the opportunity for local review, monitoring, and enforcement of utilization activities and is administered by the Town's Planning Board.

### **Issues and Implications**

1. Our town has its own rural character. This character has been altered with recent development, and could continue to change if the current pattern and pace of development continues or increases in the future. Whitefield is experiencing significant residential growth. Relatively affordable housing, available land, and relatively low taxes have helped drive this recent growth. Whitefield's housing stock has increased 30% in the 1990s and nearly one-half of the houses in the town have been built since 1980.



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2. Gravel mining is a significant economic activity in Whitefield. Compliance with standards for reclamation and buffer zones have not been consistent.
3. A large aquifer runs through the center of Whitefield from north to south. The aquifer needs to be protected as it is a source of drinking water for a large part of the community.
4. Whitefield requires that property owners receive Planning Board approval of a **Notice to Build** form before new construction occurs to ensure that the requirements of existing ordinances are observed. The NTB form should also assist the Board of Selectmen in timely and equitable property assessment, and helps the Planning Board and the Code Enforcement Officer monitor where and what type of development is occurring. Noncompliance with this requirement hampers the work of both boards and the COE.
5. We have a Subdivision Ordinance which regulates major subdivisions (containing more than five lots or dwelling units or a proposed road) and Minor Subdivisions (containing five lots or less with no proposed road). Currently there are very few major subdivisions. However, given growth trends and the amount of available land and improved roads, major subdivisions are likely eventually. At present Whitefield's Subdivision Ordinance does not make an allowance for alternative and innovative housing patterns that promote open space, rural character, and flexibility of development.
6. Whitefield has the smallest minimum lot size (1.5 acres) of the six neighboring communities.
7. There is no definition for types of commercial development and allowable uses that differentiate between low and high impact. Because there is no designated area for commercial development, such development can occur anywhere in the Town of Whitefield.
8. Our town has a large number of home businesses. These businesses are critical to the livelihood and character of Whitefield and should be encouraged.
9. Whitefield has approved and enforces several land use ordinances, including:
  - Subdivision Ordinance;
  - Minimum Lot Size Ordinance;
  - Development Ordinance;
  - Manufactured Housing Ordinance;
  - Shoreland Ordinance;
  - Cell Tower Ordinance;
  - Septage and Residuals Ordinance.

### **A-3. Local Economy**

#### **Labor Force**

The Maine Department of Labor reports that in 2002, there were 1,129 persons in Whitefield in the labor force. Of these, 1,074 were employed, for an unemployment rate of 4.9%.

The size of the labor force in Whitefield has increased steadily over the last decade, from 978 in 1992 to 1,129 in 2002 (an increase of 15% in 10 years). Over the same period, the number of unemployed decreased dramatically from 110 to 55. Concurrently, the unemployment rate in Whitefield dropped from 11.2% during the recession in 1992 to 4.9% in 2002.

**Table 3.1. Labor Force**

	<b>1992</b>	<b>% Change 1992 - 2002</b>	<b>2002</b>
Whitefield	978	15%	1,129
Augusta Labor Market Area	46,364	1%	46,978
State of Maine	648,634	6%	686,156

Source: Maine Department of Labor

**Table 3.2. Unemployment Rate**

	<b>1992</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>2002</b>
Whitefield	11.2%	6.7%	4.9%
Augusta Labor Market Area	6.7%	5.6%	4.1%
State of Maine	7.2%	5.4%	4.4%

Source: Maine Department of Labor

The Augusta Labor Market Area's labor force increased to 46,978 in 2002, an increase of only 1% in the last ten years. In the same period of time, the State of Maine's labor force increased by 6%.

The Augusta LMA's unemployment rate is consistently lower than that of Whitefield, as is the unemployment rate for the State as a whole.

#### **Commuting Patterns**

Of Whitefield's employed residents, 22% work in Whitefield itself. This includes those working from their home as well as farmers. Between 1990 and 2000, the level of Whitefield's labor force that worked in Whitefield stayed relatively consistent at 22%, even though the total number of workers increased from 183 in 1990 to 240 in 2000.

The remaining 80% of Whitefield's labor force commute elsewhere for employment.

The majority of employed Whitefield residents commuted to jobs in Kennebec County in 2000. Augusta alone accounted for 40% of the town's employed labor force. Other communities in Kennebec County accounted for 12% of the labor force.

Since 1990, the percent of Whitefield's labor force that worked in Kennebec County

increased from 43% to 52%. This suggests that Whitefield is increasingly becoming a suburb of the Augusta Labor Market Area.

Coastal Lincoln, Knox, and Sagadahoc Counties employed 13% of the town's labor force in 2000. The Midcoast's increase in jobs for Whitefield residents was 12% between 1990 and 2000. This modest increase hides a major decrease in employment in Bath because the Bath Iron Works decreased its labor force significantly in the 1990s. Communities throughout the Midcoast region experienced increases in employees commuting from Whitefield.

**Table 3.3. Commuting Patterns, 1990 to 2000**

	<b>1990</b>	<b>% Change 90 – 00</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>% of Total, 2000</b>
Whitefield	183	31%	240	22%
Augusta	331	34%	445	40%
Kennebec County: excl. Augusta	125	9%	136	12%
Midcoast Region	132	12%	148	13%
Elsewhere	61	133%	142	13%
Total	832	34%	1,111	100%

Source: US Census

### **Local Economy Profile**

In 2002, we estimate that there were more than 400 jobs in Whitefield. The 2000 US Census identified 396 commuters working in Whitefield (includes home occupations, farmers, etc). The Maine Department of Labor estimated 355 jobs in Whitefield (excluding home occupations, sole proprietorships, farmers, etc).

No direct statistics on these employees' occupations are available because the employed population is small. Anecdotal evidence suggests the major employers in town include:

- Whitefield Elementary School – more than 50 employees;
- McCormick and Sons – more than 20 employees;
- Country Farms Restaurant – more than 20 employees;
- Country Corners Grocery – more than 10 employees;
- Sandcastle Entertainment – more than 10 employees;
- Sheepscot Valley Health Center – more than 10 employees;
- Midnight Oil—9 employees.

In addition to these larger employers, the Comprehensive Planning Committee has surveyed the town and identified more than 130 businesses that operate within the community. These range from home occupations to farms to larger employers in the community.

More than half of the jobs available in Whitefield are filled by residents of Whitefield. Other communities that provide a significant number of employees in town include Wiscasset, Windsor, Randolph, Chelsea, and Augusta.

### **Issues and Implications**

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1. Despite Whitefield's rural setting, we are increasingly becoming a suburb of Augusta and the Midcoast region. Our rate of growth, changing commuting patterns, and employment profile suggest that this role will strengthen in the future.
2. As the number of commuters increases in Whitefield, it will have many implications on our community. For example, transportation corridors will be more heavily used. Demand for space for residential development will compete with more traditional natural resource based activities. These implications can drastically change residents' relationships with the local natural resource based economy.
3. Whitefield's economy has a very large number of small and home-based businesses. These include a wide variety of farms, home professional businesses, and seasonal occupations.
4. There are currently some clustering of businesses in Cooper Mills and other villages in the community and, except for Shoreland Zoning, there is little to preclude any type of business from locating anywhere in town.
5. Our town's geology has created a large number of gravel deposits. Many gravel operations are extracting this resource to be used in construction throughout the region. The transportation of this resource can degrade our town's transportation network.
6. While Whitefield does receive economic development representation from the Lincoln County Economic Development Office, our town has no local organization to promote economic activity in the community.

## **A-4. Housing**

### **Housing Unit Change**

In 2000, there were 958 housing units in Whitefield. This represents significant growth from the 737 units in 1990 (an increase of 30%). This rate of increase is significantly larger than for Lincoln County (19%) and the state as a whole (11%).

All of Whitefield's surrounding communities grew significantly, but none as much as Whitefield (Table 4.1.)

**Table 4.1. Housing Unit Change, 1990 - 2000**

	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>% Change, 1990 – 2000</b>
<b>Whitefield</b>	727	958	30%
Windsor	758	952	26%
Chelsea	811	1,015	25%
Pittston	889	1,070	20%
Lincoln County	17,538	20,849	19%
Alna	264	315	19%
Jefferson	1,219	1,427	17%
Maine	587,045	651,901	11%
Augusta	9,572	9,480	-1%

Source: US Census

### **Housing Unit Type**

Whitefield's housing is overwhelmingly single-family housing. In 2000, three-quarters of the housing in Whitefield was single-family housing, and another 23% was mobile homes. The remaining units were duplexes (2% of all housing units) and 3 or 4 unit structures.

**Table 4.2. Housing Units by Type**

	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>% Change, 1990 – 2000</b>
Single-Family	570	717	26%
Duplex	7	20	186%
Multi-Family	9	4	-56%
Mobile	145	217	50%
Other	6	0	-100%
Total Units	737	958	30%

Source: US Census

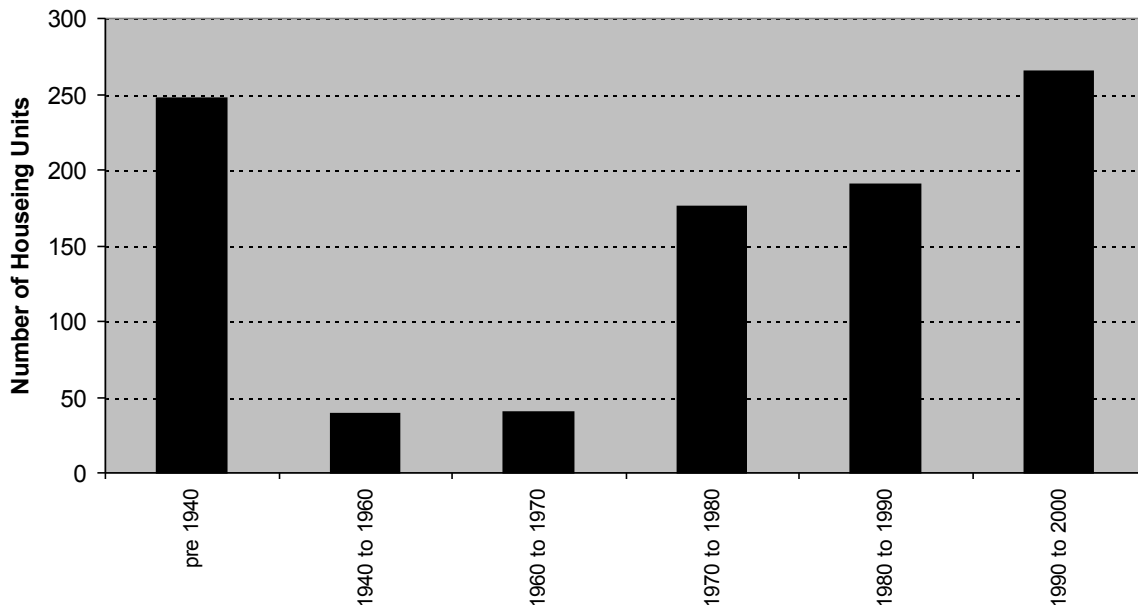
Since 1990, mobile homes have increased by 72 units (or 50%). This rate of growth outpaced the rate for single-family homes (26%).

### **Age of Housing Units**

Nearly half of Whitefield's housing units have been built since 1980 (or 48%). Another one-quarter of the units were built before 1940.

Whitefield's housing stock is relatively new compared with the county and the state as a whole.

**Figure 4.1. Age Of Whitefield Housing Units**



Source: US Census

### Housing Unit Value

In 2000, the median value of owner-occupied housing units was \$87,200. This was an increase over 1990 when the median household was valued at \$76,300.

The Maine State Housing Authority provides housing value estimates based on 2002 data. MSHA estimated that, based on 12 home sales in 2002, the median sale price in Whitefield was \$75,950. These median sale prices tend to be more volatile than the data reported by the US Census, because the sample population used to determine the MSHA estimates are much smaller than the sample used to determine the US Census estimate.

### Affordability Assessment

Affordable housing for homeowners is defined by Maine's Growth Management Act as housing in which the mortgage payment, taxes, insurance, condominium fees, and utilities do not exceed 33% of the homeowner's gross income. For renters, the standard is 30% of gross income for rent and utilities.

One of the State of Maine's objectives is to encourage a supply of housing that is affordable to households in three income groups:

- Very Low Income Households – the income of these households is less than 50% of Lincoln County's median household income in 2002. The Maine State

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Housing Authority estimates that this includes the 186 households earning less than \$18,300 per year.

- Lower Income Households – the income of these households is between 50% and 80% of the county's median household income. In Whitefield, this includes the estimated 158 households that earn between \$18,300 and \$29,300 per year.
- Moderate Income Households –the income of these households is between 80% and 150% of the county's median household income. In Whitefield, this includes the estimated 305 households that earn between \$29,300 and \$54,900 per year.

The Maine State Housing Authority calculated an affordability index for Whitefield that compares the ability of a community's household of median income to purchase the community's median priced home.

**Table 4.2. Affordability Summary, 2002**

	2002 Median Income	2002 Median Home Value	Home that can be Purchased with Median Income	Affordability Index
<b>Whitefield</b>	<b>\$37,804</b>	<b>\$75,950</b>	<b>\$108,897</b>	<b>1.43</b>
Augusta Housing Market*	\$42,047	\$93,900	\$117,762	1.25
Maine	\$42,029	\$133,500	\$118,618	0.8
Lincoln County	\$41,166	\$143,000	\$118,858	0.83

Source: Maine State Housing Authority

Note: an affordability index reading greater than 1.0 suggests that a community is affordable

\*Augusta Housing Market includes the communities of Augusta, Chelsea, Farmingdale, Fayette, Gardiner, Hallowell, Litchfield, Manchester, Monmouth, Pittston, Randolph, Readfield, Wayne, West Gardiner, Windsor, Winthrop, Leeds, Jefferson, Somerville, Whitefield, Hebert's Gore, Palermo, China, Vassalboro, Sidney, Belgrade, Mount Vernon, Rome, and Vienna.

Based on this analysis, Whitefield is an affordable community when compared with the Augusta Housing Market, the state as a whole, and Lincoln County.

### **Issues and Implications**

1. Whitefield's housing stock is growing rapidly. It increased 30% in the 1990s, and nearly half of the town's houses have been built since 1980. This rapid growth is projected to continue through 2015. Most new residential growth appears to be in commuting distance of Augusta
2. Single-family homes and mobile homes accounted for virtually all of the town's new housing built between 1990 and 2000. The town's stock of mobile homes is increasing at a faster rate than growth in the single-family housing stock. The low-cost of mobile homes is a major factor driving the increasing popularity of these units, according to state planning office projections. This trend will continue through 2015.
3. Housing in Whitefield is relatively inexpensive when compared with incomes in the

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region and surrounding communities. While there are many households in the community below the poverty level, in general median household incomes are able to afford the median housing unit.

4. The affordability of the housing in Whitefield appears to be one of the major factors driving the community's rapid growth.

5. Many of the new families moving into Whitefield are young families. Most of these families will be putting their children through the local school system. School enrollments could stay high for many years to come. The number of occupants per dwelling declined from 2.92 to 2.62 from 1990 to 2000.

6. Many of the new houses are being built along the town's existing road corridors. While this pattern of development protects interior land from development, it can impact the scenic character of the community. However, as the road corridors are built out, interior areas become more attractive for development.

7. Whitefield currently has no required building permit to track the amount, size, and quality of construction in the community, and the required Notice to Build for all structures has a high level of noncompliance. This prevents the town from maintaining accurate records resulting in lost tax assessments and increasing the tax burden on other citizens.



## **A-5. Transportation**

Transportation networks connect Whitefield residents with each other as well as the rest of the world. Whitefield's transportation network is more dependent on automobiles than most communities, but there are informal trail networks as well.

Understanding the extent of the transportation network, trends in its use, and how changing development patterns could impact this network is crucial when planning for the community's future.

### **Vehicular Traffic**

Whitefield's transportation network is dominated by vehicular traffic traveling on the community's network of public and private roads. The maintenance responsibility for these roads depends on the principal use of the roadway and falls on private individuals, the Town of Whitefield, and the State of Maine.

As of 2004, the road network within Whitefield consists of 67.0 miles of roadways (Figure 1, Table 1). These roadways vary in function and character from high-speed arterials to private gravel roadways.

- There are approximately 2.0 miles of **arterial roadway**, defined by the Maine Department of Transportation as travel routes that carry high speed, long distance traffic usually with a US Route number designation. The arterial route in Whitefield includes the portions of Route 17 that traverse the northern borders of the town.
- There are approximately 25.6 miles of **collector roadways**, defined by MDOT as travel routes that collect and distribute traffic from and to arterials, serving places of lower population densities and somewhat removed from main travel routes. In Whitefield, these collectors include Routes 218, 126, and 194 and Cooper Road.
- There are approximately 39.1 miles of **local roads**, defined by MDOT as all roadways not classified as an arterial or collector, and serving primarily adjacent land areas. In Whitefield, these include the 13 miles of gravel roads that are maintained in the summer by the Town of Whitefield.

There are approximately eight private roads and many named and unnamed common driveways, which are maintained by private individuals and/or businesses.

The Town of Whitefield is responsible for summer maintenance of 39.23 miles of roadway, almost 30% of which are gravel. As residential growth occurs on these roads, maintenance costs will rise due to increases in traffic. As a result of increased use and additional development, the town has a policy of paving gravel roads in order to reduce annual maintenance costs. For example, Cookson Road, which is gravel and has experienced a significant increase in residential development, was paved in 2004. By encouraging development in areas that are served by suitable roads, increased maintenance costs associated with gravel roads and future capital outlays for paving gravel roads may be avoided or at least delayed.

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**Table 5.1. Whitefield Road Inventory**

Name	Function	Length (mi.)	Summer Maint (mi)	Winter Maint (mi)	Paved (mi.)	Gravel (mi.)	Condition (P/F/G/E)	Comments	Local Concerns
Route 17	arterial	2.05			2.05		E	paved w/in past 5 yrs	
Route 126	collector	5.90			5.90		P	Reconstructed 2004	gravel truck route, higher speeds increased traffic
Route 194	collector	5.30		5.30	5.30		G	paved w/in past 5 yrs	
Route 218 North	collector	3.10		3.10	3.10		G	paved w/in past 5 yrs	gravel truck route
Route 218 South	collector	3.25		3.25	3.25		G	paved w/in past 5 yrs	gravel truck route
Bailey Road		0.40	0.40	0.40		0.40	G		
Benner Lane		1.05	1.05	1.05		1.05	F		
Carleton Road		1.45	1.45	1.45		1.45	F		
Cookson Road		0.40	0.40	0.40		0.40	F	Section paved 2004	sig. traffic increase
Cooper Road	collector	3.53		3.53	3.53		G	2004 DOT improvements deferred	gravel truck rte; hvy traffic, dangerous intersection
Devine Road		1.94	1.94	1.94	1.00	0.94	F		
Dexter Lane		0.12	0.12	0.12		0.12	G		
Doyle Road		1.47	1.47	1.47		1.47	F		
East River Road (218)	collector	4.50		4.50	4.50		G	paved w/in past 5 yrs	gravel truck route
Ford Road		0.10	0.10	0.10		0.10			
Fowles Road		0.48	0.48	0.48		0.48	F		
Gorman Lane		0.26	0.26	0.26		0.26	G		
Heath Road		2.73	2.73	2.73	2.73		G		
Henry Lane		0.15	0.15	0.15		0.15	F		
Hilton Road		2.91	2.91	2.91	2.91		G (F-gravel)		
Howe Road		2.39	2.39	2.39	2.39		G	Paved 2005	
Ctr Hunts Meadow Rd		2.40	2.40	2.40	2.40		G	partially paved 2005	
Jewett Road		1.10	1.10	1.10		1.10	F		
Libby Lane		0.10	0.10	0.10		0.10	G		
Main Street		1.10	1.10	1.10	1.10		G		
Nilsen Lane		0.15	0.15	0.15		0.15	F		
N. Hunts Meadow Rd.		1.99	1.99	1.99	1.99		G		
Palmer Road		0.97	0.97	0.97	0.97		E		
Philbrick Road		1.20	1.20	1.20		1.20	F		
Piper Lane		0.38	0.38	0.38		0.38	F		
Rooney Road		0.90	0.90	0.90		0.90	F		
Senott Road		1.31	1.31	1.31	1.31		G		
Somerville Road		0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29		P	paved 2004	
S. Hunts Meadow Rd.		1.90	1.90	1.90	1.90		P	Partially paved 2004	
Thayer Road		1.73	1.73	1.73	1.73		G		
Townhouse Road		4.39	4.39	4.39	4.39		G		
Vigue Road		3.28	3.28	3.28	3.28		G	paved 2005	
Windsor Road		0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19		F	paved 2004	
Totals		66.86	39.23	58.91	56.21	10.65			

Source: Town of Whitefield

**Road Maintenance and Capital Improvements**

Whitefield has substantial gravel deposits, particularly in the southern area of the community. Roads routinely used by gravel pit operators include Routes 126 and 218, including the East River Road, and the Cooper Road. Unless a road is constructed to accommodate such traffic, heavy loads may damage the road's base and sub-base and cause deterioration of the paved surface. Deferred maintenance can have similar impacts.

Several Whitefield roads have experienced significant deterioration due to heavy truck traffic. MDOT has reconstructed or paved Routes 126, 17, 194 and 218, including East River Road over the past few years. While Cooper Road has a good surface, it has some significant vertical curves that, while contributing to its rural appearance, present safety concerns to heavy passenger vehicle and truck traffic. These vertical curves will be reduced in 2004.

Other town roads, including some with gravel surfaces, have experienced significant increases in traffic due to dispersed development. This traffic will accelerate deterioration, especially when the surface or base of gravel roads becomes saturated.

The Maine Department of Transportation's (MDOT) Six-Year Plan identifies long-term plans for improvements to state and state-aid roads. In addition, MDOT's Biennial Transportation Improvement Program (BTIP) identifies projects that will be improved during the current two-year budget period.

At the current time there are no six-year plan projects in Whitefield, although the 2004-2005 BTIP includes a project to improve the sight distance and vertical alignment at the intersection of Cooper Road and Hunts Meadow Road. As noted above, the work on Cooper Road will include reducing some existing vertical curves. The balance of Route 126 in Whitefield was reconstructed by MDOT in 2004. Projects that were considered but which did not have high enough priority to be funded in the six year plan included Route 218, with 2.33 miles in Whitefield, and Route 194, with 2.15 miles in Whitefield. These roads will probably be included in future six-year plans if sufficient funding is available.

MDOT will continue to rebuild existing roads as funds are available. However, its top priority will continue to be its pavement preventive maintenance (PPM) program. The condition of a well-paved road tends to be stable for the first 5-10 years. Then, as cracks form and water gets into pavement and base, the rate of deterioration quickens. The PPM program focuses on applying lighter, less expensive pavement treatments earlier and more frequently in a pavement's life, thereby avoiding the point at which the pavement quickly deteriorates and the cost of repair accelerates.

Whitefield has an attractive rural roadscape that highlights the community's agricultural history. Roads such as the East River Road and the Townhouse Road, offer winding automotive pathways through forests, fields, hilly areas and historic rural village neighborhoods. As these roads are rebuilt or improved to accommodate heavier trucks and faster cars, some of these important visual attributes may be lost, as well as increased traffic and higher speeds. Context-sensitive design is a technique often used to

ensure that as roads are brought up to modern standards, the character of the existing roads is not diminished.

In addition the MDOT plans, the Town of Whitefield prepares an annual plan for road paving and related work. The town maintains a record of all past road projects and develops an annual improvement plan based, in part, on the age and condition of road surfaces. When gravel roads are paved, the work routinely includes additional clearing, ditching, and enhancement of gravel base.

### **Traffic Volumes and Patterns of Use**

Traffic volumes have been steadily increasing on Whitefield's road network. MDOT counts traffic volume on a rotating schedule. The most recent count in Whitefield was in 2000.

In 2000, the highest Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) was on Route 17 in northern Whitefield. Nearly 8,000 vehicles traveled along this corridor every day<sup>1</sup> (Table 5.2). Route 126 at Cooper Road and at the Sheepscot River handled more than 2,000 vehicles each day. More than 1,000 vehicles per day traveled along Cooper Road and Route 126 at the East River Road.

The use of these road networks has been increasing. Since 1980, average vehicle trips per day town wide have increased by 75%. Route 126 at Cooper Road has increased by more than 230%. Townhouse Road has increased by more than 100%. More housing units in Whitefield, a suburbanizing population throughout the region, and more vehicle-trips-per-day from each household account for the increasing trends in AADT.

Between 1997 and 2000, traffic patterns have continued to change. In general, traffic through Whitefield Village has decreased slightly, while the Route 126 corridor and areas in North Whitefield have increased their AADT.

Regardless of the reasons for the traffic growth, roads in the community will continue to experience additional vehicle use in the future. This is an important component of any municipal road improvement program. All of the roads listed in Table 2 are paved but some may need wider travelways, better base, or drainage improvements in order to accommodate additional traffic.

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<sup>1</sup> The AADTs are based on actual vehicle counts, which are adjusted to take into account seasonal differences.

## Proposed

**Table 5.2. Average Annual Daily Traffic**

Road	Intersection	AADT 1980	AADT 1987	AADT 1997	AADT 2000	Change '80-'00	Change '97-'00
Route 126	at East River Road	738	1,220	1,030	1,280	73%	24%
Routes 17/32	at Route 218			6,180	7,280		18%
Cooper Road	at Route 126	642	850	1,010	1,140	76%	13%
Route 126	at Sheepscot River	1,200	1,500	1,920	2,120	77%	10%
Hilton Road	at Route 218	313	460	450	490	57%	9%
Hunts Meadow Rd	at Cooper Road			320	290		9%
Townhouse Road	at Route 126	404	560	760	820	103%	8%
Heath Road	at Route 218			150	160		7%
Routes 17/32	at Windsor TL			7,350	7,900		7%
Vigue Road	at Route 126			770	810		5%
Route 126	at Cooper Road	634	980	2,080	2,150	239%	3%
Route 194	at East River Road	206	240	360	360	89%	0%
Sennot Road	at Route 218			250	250		0%
Route 194	at Townhouse Road	374	560	690	680	82%	-1%
Townhouse Road	at Route 194	327	410	490	450	38%	-8%
Route 218	at Route 194	401	800	860	720	80%	-16%
Cooper Road	at Hunts Meadow Rd				1,180		
East River Road	at Route 126	375	900				
Route 218	at Route 126	206	240				
East River Road	at Route 194	375	670				
Route 218	at Routes 17/32			1,180			

Source: Maine Department of Transportation

**Dangerous Intersections and Roads**

MDOT identifies high crash locations. All accidents that result in more than \$1,000 in property damage and/or an injury/death are analyzed on a rolling three-year period. Any location that experiences 8 or more accidents in the three-year period or that has a Critical Rate Factor<sup>2</sup> (CRF) of 1.0 or higher is considered a high crash location.

According to MDOT's database, the town's most dangerous intersection was at Thayer Road and Bailey Road (Table 5.3.). This has a CRF of more than 5.0. It is unclear why the CRF is so high at this intersection, except that it is very close to the Thayer Road-Route 218 intersection. Due to expansion at the nearby Crooker gravel pit, an alternate initial section of the Thayer Road was constructed, and the former section limited to gravel trucks. This will likely improve the safety of the intersection with Bailey Road.

Other high crash locations include the intersections at Vigue Road/Howe Road, Vigue Road/Doyle Road and Route 17/Main Street. Sight distance on westbound Howe Road to the south on Vigue Road appears to be impeded by trees and a rock wall. Eliminating these visual barriers or elevating Howe Road at the intersection should improve visibility. Doyle Road intersects Vigue Road at a severe angle, impacting the visibility of southbound traffic on Vigue Road. Existing trees also may affect safety at this intersection. MDOT Division 5 staff reviewed the Route 17/Main Street intersection and noted that most accidents were rear end collisions. Because the intersection appears to be adequately designed with sufficient sight distance, they believe that the accidents may be caused by driver inattention of traffic turning onto Main Street.

**Table 5.3 . High Crash Locations**

<sup>2</sup> The critical rate factor is a statistical measure that compares accident frequency at a location with similar locations throughout the state.

## Proposed

Intersection		Critical Rate Factor 1985-1987	Critical Rate Factor 1999-2001
Road A	Road B		
Thayer Rd	Bailey Rd		5.03
Rt 126	Hunts Meadow	1.73	3.32
Vigue Rd	Howe Rd	1.17	2.0
Vigue Rd	Doyle Rd		1.59
Cooper Rd	Hunts Meadow	2.64	1.45
Rt 17	Main St		1.37
Rt 126	Libby Lane	1.92	0
Rt 126	Gorham Lane	1.12	0
Rt 218	Thayer Rd	1.24	0
Townhouse Rd	Rt 194	1.98	0

Source: Maine Department of Transportation

In addition to these high crash locations, there are several sections of road for which the MDOT has collected traffic accident data (Table 5.4).

**Table 5.4. Additional Accident Data**

Road	Total '85-'87	'00-'02 *			
		Total	Fatal	Personal Injury	Property Damage
Rt 218	20	28	0	8	20
Rt 17	19	25	1	8	17
Rt 126	23	17	0	5	12
Cooper Road	21	17	0	6	11
Townhouse Rd	8	11	0	3	8
Hunts Meadow Rd	17	10	0	4	6
Vigue Rd	5	7	0	1	6
Main St.		7	0	2	5
Rt 194	4	5	0	1	4
Howe Rd	8	5	0	1	4
Hilton Rd		4	0	3	1
Thayer Rd		4	0	1	3

Source: Maine Department of Transportation

\*Note: Data for Town roads based on 1999-2001; State roads based on 2000-2001

### Access Management

MDOT has adopted an Access Management Rule that controls the development of driveways and entrances on all state and state-aid roads (Table 6). A driveway is an access that serves up to 5 dwelling units or other uses that generate less than 50 vehicle trips per day while an entrance includes anything that exceeds these driveway thresholds.

**Table 5.5. State Maintained Roads**

Road	Classification
Route 17	Minor Arterial
Route 126	Major Collector
Route 194 west of Route 218	Major Collector
Route 218	Major Collector
Route 194 east of Route 218	Minor Collector
Cooper Road	Minor Collector

Source: Maine Department of Transportation

Any person proposing a driveway or entrance on one of the state-aid roads must apply for a permit from MDOT. This requirement is in addition to any local permits. All such accesses must meet minimum standards for sight distance, minimum distance to intersections, maximum width, drainage controls, backing up onto the highway, among

others.

These standards are higher for Route 17, which is considered a “mobility” arterial, and include minimum spacing between entrances and, potentially, the use of shared accesses. Standards for entrances are generally higher than for driveways and may include paving and enhanced drainage requirements. In addition, there is a prohibition on the siting of public facilities, including schools, state municipal facilities, etc., on mobility arterials with a speed limit greater than 45 mph. This includes that portion of Route 17 within Whitefield.

Because the Access Management Rule is primarily intended to ensure safe use of and access to roadways, towns are encouraged to adopt similar standards for development on municipal roads. Minimum sight distance requirements, drainage improvements, and width standards, are just as important for the safe use of local roads as for state highways. Many of Whitefield’s municipal roads, including East River Road, Hunts Meadow Road, Townhouse Road and others, have horizontal and vertical curves that limit visibility of driveways. A minimum sight distance standard for all new driveways would go far in improving safety on town roads in the future.

### Traffic Control Devices

The only traffic control devices employed in Whitefield are stop and yield signs at intersections. MDOT has not indicated the need to install additional traffic control devices within the community.

### Bridges

Table 5.6. lists bridges in Whitefield. With the exception of the South Hunts Meadow Road Bridge over the West Branch of the Eastern River, all of the bridges are owned by the State. In 2003, the Route 17 - Sheepscot River bridge was repaired and the Route 194 - Albee Stream bridge was replaced. No other bridge improvements are planned by MDOT at this time.

**Table 5.6. Bridges in Whitefield, 2004**

Location	Owner	Year Built	Structure Condition	Design Load (tons)	Recent Repairs	Traffic AADT	Sufficiency Rating
Rt 17 & 32 over W. Branch Sheepscot	State	2000	8	45		1137	98.7
Rt 126 over West Branch Eastern	State	1992	6	45		1254	98.4
S Hunts Meadow Rd over W. Branch Eastern	Town	1984	5	36		194	86.9
Rt 17 & 32 over Sheepscot River	State	1961	7	20	2003	7360	81.0
Rt 194 over Albee Strm	State	1952	5	20	1990	687	76.5
Rt 218 over Clary Lake Outlet	State	1953	6	20		1294	74.6
Howe Rd over W. Branch Sheepscot	State	1936	5		1987	485	54.8
Rt 218 over Sheepscot R	State	1946	5	15	1995	991	51.7
Main St over Sheepscot R	State	1921	4	15	1999	1069	48.8
Rt 126 over Sheepscot R	State	1935	4	120	1999	2143	43.8
Rt 194 over Albee Strm	State	1949	2	15	1990	819	40.0

Source: Maine Department of Transportation

### Parking Facilities

There are no public parking facilities in Whitefield. Parking lots at the town office and municipal school are generally sufficient to meet normal needs of these facilities. Much of

the parking at the school, however, for special events such as Town Meeting and basketball games is roadside, which can be hazardous. Some private businesses have indicated a need for additional parking spaces.

### **Pedestrian Facilities**

There are no pedestrian facilities in Whitefield

### **Public Transportation**

There is no fixed route bus system that serves Whitefield. Coastal Trans, Inc. (CTI) is a private, non-profit corporation that provides demand response services to Whitefield residents. CTI uses volunteer drivers whenever possible to reduce transportation costs. These drivers use their own vehicles to transport program-qualified people needing non-emergency transportation. Commercial bus service (Concord Trailways) to Bangor, Portland, Boston, and Logan Airport is available in Damariscotta, Wiscasset, and Augusta.

### **Airports**

There are no general aviation airports in Whitefield. Airports that serve the Whitefield residents include the Maine State Airport in Augusta, Waterville Airport, the Wiscasset Airport, the Knox County Regional Airport, the Portland International Jetport and Bangor International Airport. The Augusta, Bangor, Knox County and Portland airports offer scheduled air service. Various improvements are planned at these airports as part of MDOT's Six-Year Plan.

### **Railroad Facilities and Rail Services**

There are no active rail lines or facilities in Whitefield. As part of MDOT's Six-Year Plan, it is completing planned improvements to the Rockland Branch so that passenger rail service can be extended to Rockland. The Department is also planning passenger rail stations in Wiscasset and Newcastle that will be convenient for Whitefield residents.

A significant number of Whitefield commuters have jobs in the greater Augusta area. The availability of regular passenger rail service in Lincoln County may make Whitefield more attractive to live for those who now live or work in the greater Portland area.

### **Scenic Byways and Views**

Townhouse Road, East River Road, Mills Road near Hendsbee's, Head Tide Road, South Hunts Meadow Road. For more information, see ***Natural Resources***.

### **Corridor Planning**

A number of state highways connect Whitefield with its neighbors. These include:

- Route 17 (Jefferson, Windsor, Chelsea and Augusta);
- Route 32 (Jefferson and Windsor);
- Route 194 (Alna and Pittston);
- Route 218 (Alna);
- Route 126 (Jefferson and Pittston).

Many of these towns share similar issues and concerns along these corridors and several



are in the process of preparing comprehensive plans. It would be beneficial for these communities to jointly discuss issues such as road safety, speed limits and community character.

**Regional Transportation Advisory Committee**

Whitefield is one of 72 communities in MDOT Region 5, which includes all of Lincoln, Knox and Sagadahoc Counties, all of Waldo County except Burnham, Unity and Troy, and Brunswick and Harpswell from Cumberland County. The Region 5 Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) is an advisory committee to MDOT with the charge of providing input into the transportation planning process. Members represent diverse interests, including environmental, business, municipal, state, alternative modes of transportation and general public interests.

RTAC 5's Plan for the Greater Mid-Coast Region has number of recommendations to MDOT that may affect Whitefield. They include:

1. Continue to evaluate posted speed limits and adjust as necessary;
2. Encourage alternative scenic loops;
3. Recommend using Maine Turnpike tolls to improve roads affected by secondary traffic from the turnpike;
4. Provide MDOT technical assistance to bridge structures less than 20 feet in length that are not on state or state-aid roads;
5. Give high priority to arterial highway improvements;
6. Identify gravel truck routes and increase priority within the major collector program;
7. Continue the Rural Road Initiative that provides towns with a 2/3 match;
8. Consider expanding the state bridge program in the future;
9. Encourage towns to plan because unplanned land use can affect the functionality of roads and the longevity of road improvements;
10. Encourage Context Sensitive Design that is based on consistent decision-making, environmental consciousness, protection of the human and natural environment, and encouragement of citizen input, collaboration, and consensus building;
11. Continue to evaluate all state bridges for potential public access to water;
12. Work with towns to address the community impacts of highway projects;
13. Encourage transportation and its land use impacts to be a strong component of comprehensive plans;

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14. Encourage towns to incorporate access management into their local ordinances;
15. Address transportation-related impacts to the Sheepscot River's Atlantic salmon habitat;
16. Work to decrease the weight limit on state roads to 80,000 pounds, which is the same as on the Maine Turnpike.

### **Issues and Implications**

1. Road improvements and additional development may mean higher speeds and increased traffic.
2. Funding for the South Hunts Meadow Road bridge replacement will be needed.
3. Will gravel roads be paved? Cost, aesthetics, traffic volume, location are criteria that should be carefully considered.
4. Should the town adopt standards for the development of municipal roads, e.g. minimum sight distances for new driveways, drainage provisions, width standards.

## **A-6. Public Service and Facilities**

### **General Government**

Whitefield has a Selectmen-Town Meeting form of government. The Town Meeting serves the legislative function of local government in that it passes ordinances needed for orderly governance, approves the town budget, levies taxes, and elects various town officials

Municipal administrative services are provided at the Town Office in the Town House at the north end of the Town House Road, in Whitefield.

**Table 6.1. Elected Officials in Whitefield**

Elected Officials	Term
1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> Selectmen (also Board of Assessors and Overseers of the Poor)	3 yrs- Staggered
Road Commissioner	1 yr
Superintending School Board (5 members)	3 yrs
Planning Board (5 members)	2 yrs

Note: Shoreland review functions are handled by the Planning Board.

The Town of Whitefield appoints officials and hires Town employees, including:

- Town Clerk (Registrar, Treasurer, Tax Collector);
- Deputy Administrative Assistant;
- Office Assistant;
- Code Enforcement Officer;
- Fire Chief, Assistant Fire Chief and Civil Defense Director;
- Plumbing Inspector;
- Health Officer;
- Animal Control Officer;
- Ballot Clerks;
- Recycling Center Attendant;
- Highway workers;
- Cemetery caretaker.

In addition, the Town appoints the following standing boards and committees:

- Budget Committee (7 members);
- Comprehensive Planning Committee;
- Recycling Committee;
- Appeals Board (5 members).

### **Solid Waste**

The Whitefield town dump was closed in 1982.

Currently Whitefield has a contract to use the Augusta Hatch Hill Land Fill for solid waste disposal. The contract is renewable annually and is based on a per/resident fee.

Residents must pay an annual permit fee and a per/ton tipping fee to use the Hatch Hill

facility.

**Table 6.2. Whitefield's Hatch Hill Annual Costs**

Year	Costs
1999	\$20,276
2000	\$20,275
2001	\$20,286
2002	\$23,867
2003	\$23,867
2004	\$23,867

Source: Town of Whitefield

Several private trash pick-up services are available to town residents on a pay for pick-up basis. Town businesses contract with private trash haulers from the greater Augusta area.

In July 1990, Whitefield established a voluntary **recycling program** in conjunction with the Lincoln County recycling program. A recycling center was established behind the town's salt shed. A building for storage glass jars and bottles, and cans, and deposit of other items to be recycled was constructed in 1998. Materials currently recycled are corrugated cardboard and brown paper bags, newspapers and magazines, mixed paper, glass, tin and aluminum cans, #2 clear and colored plastic and some other plastic products, and Styrofoam peanuts. A "swap shop" for books, working appliances, and some other serviceable items is also present. Recycling is in operation on Saturday from 8 a.m. to noon, and on Monday from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

## **Public Safety**

### Police Protection

Police protection is provided by Lincoln County Sheriff's Department and the State Police. Whitefield is connected through the enhanced 911 system, with all calls and

responses dispatched through the Lincoln County Emergency Response Center.

### Fire Protection and Emergency Response

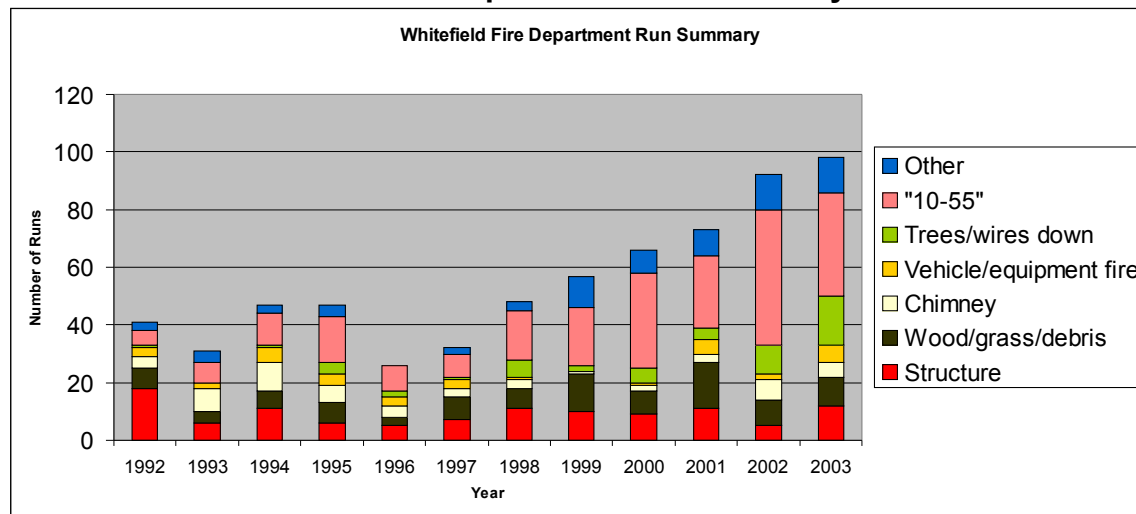
Whitefield receives fire protection through a partnership with the Coopers Mills Volunteer Fire Department (CMVFD), Kings Mills Volunteer Fire Department (KMVFD), and North Whitefield Volunteer Fire Departments (NWVFD), each of which is organized as a separate association, with its own officers, bylaws, and bank accounts. Each has its own station, equipment, and personnel. Each was organized shortly after the Second World War; each has its own traditions, history, and supporters among current and past firefighters, their families, and auxiliary organizations. Today they represent one of the most visible reminders of the three villages of Whitefield.

The travel time between villages influenced the original associations, and even today plays an important role in determining the number of stations for adequate fire protection. The travel time from the Coopers Mills station to a fire south of the Kings Mills station can be more than 20 minutes, especially in poor driving conditions. The existing stations are ideally located at the three points in Whitefield where the Sheepscot River can be crossed providing access to both east and west sides of the river. Most of the town is within a three-mile radius from one or the other stations.

Whitefield has implemented the Enhanced 9-1-1 emergency telephone system. An emergency call is answered by the Lincoln County Emergency Response Center which dispatches one call for the Whitefield Fire Department without differentiating among the three companies. Whitefield has a Town Fire Chief and Assistant Town Chief, appointed by the Town Selectmen. The Town Chief chairs meetings of the officers of the three companies, and exercises command authority at incident scenes. The Town Chief and Assistant town Chief are the town's designated forest fire wardens and are authorized to issue open burning permits under authority from the Maine Bureau of Forestry.

In 2003, Whitefield fire companies responded to 98 incidents, making that the busiest year for the fire service, up from 93 in 2002. As shown in Figure 6.1, the total number of calls has more than doubled (from 48 to 98) between 1998 and 2003. Structure fires and chimney fires in Whitefield have declined in recent years. Most of the increase in calls has come from responses to traffic accidents, labeled as "10-55" and the "other" category, which includes hazardous materials, rescues, furnace malfunctions, and false alarms (CO or smoke detectors which are tied to a dispatch service).

**FIGURE 6.1. Whitefield Fire Department Run Summary**



As shown in Figure 6.1, the Whitefield Fire Department responds to a wide variety of emergency calls even before the threat of terrorism became an issue. This has led to more dispatches and required training for a wide range of public safety-related issues. The fire department is now expected to respond to the following:

- fires;
- emergency medical situations;
- traffic accidents;
- hazardous materials incidents (Awareness level)
- downed electric lines or problems;
- CO, smoke detector, fire and lifeline alarms;
- trees downed on public roads;

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- water rescues;
- Emergency Management Agency (EMA) assistance, as requested in response to homeland security matters, natural disasters, and civil emergency preparedness;
- law enforcement assistance as requested.

The following non-emergency services are also provided:

- fire prevention program;
- fire safety education;
- fire inspections.

A vital element in ensuring adequate coverage is the mutual aid agreements with adjoining towns. Whitefield fire companies respond to structure fires and other serious incidents in neighboring towns and vice versa. In the last 4 years, between 15 to 20% of Whitefield Fire Department dispatches have been to mutual aid calls. In return, firefighters and emergency equipment from neighboring towns respond to major incidents in Whitefield. There is a high level of cooperation between the mutual aid towns which have organized the Sheepscot Valley Fire Task Force. The Task Force conducts joint training exercises and provides a forum for coordination of purchase of new equipment so that each town does not duplicate equipment available from another response company when a different purchase could be mutually beneficial.

Each station operates and maintains its own equipment, which includes a pump truck, tanker, and forestry vehicle. CMVFD also operates and maintains a utility vehicle with a cascade air system for re-filling air packs, a small generator, and portable lights. The newest vehicle in the overall Whitefield inventory is the 1993 CMVFD pumper, purchased by the Association. The newest vehicle in KMVFD dates to 1978; the newest in NWVFD to 1982. A long range planning committee has studied the issue of apparatus needed for protection, releasing a recommendation that the existing pumper and tanker in Kings Mills be replaced by one new pumper-tanker. The plan was approved by the Selectmen and Budget Committee in January 2004, and adopted by the voters at the March 2004 Town Meeting authorizing the Town finance the purchase of a new pumper-tanker.

Each of the three Whitefield stations is over 50 years old. They have been expanded and modified repeatedly over the years, but they lack basic amenities and facilities now considered standard for maintenance and training. It is estimated to require over \$26,000 to bring the three existing stations into compliance with current code or regulatory requirements, or to carry out necessary basic upkeep. CMVFD investigated the cost of upgrading its current building and concluded that it would be more cost effective to invest in a new building -- a conclusion which would probably also apply to the other two Whitefield fire stations. CMVFD has set aside money -- raised through its own efforts -- to finance constructing a new station. Upon the finding by the long range planning committee that a station in Coopers Mills was essential to providing appropriate town-wide responses, CMVFD has begun preliminary planning to design, construct, and finance a new station.

In 2005, the Town purchased the 4.8 acre "Greene" property and structure adjacent to the

Town House and Town Office. Any decision concerning consolidating the Kings Mills and North Whitefield stations or investing significant money into upgrading either station will await the decision on upgrading of other facilities in the area of the Town Office to allow consideration of incorporation of a fire station as part of the improvements. The scope and timing of that project will determine whether that station replaces both the existing North Whitefield and Kings Mills Stations or whether Kings Mills retains a third station.

The greatest challenge facing Whitefield is personnel, including recruiting, training, and, retaining qualified firefighters and officers. The very laws intended to protect the lives and safety of firefighters add a large time commitment to training and certifications, and paperwork to document compliance. Along with legal liability issues, these mandates are seen as a deterrent to attracting new volunteers. CMVFD with 15 active firefighters, and KMVFD with 13, are considered relatively healthy in terms of numbers, qualifications, and ability to respond. NWVFD, with 5 active firefighters, has insufficient personnel to be able to respond regularly to incidents. The Town fire officers are working to recruit new members for each of the organizations and to develop a junior firefighter program.

Even within the two relatively healthy companies there are worrisome trends. One is the age structure. Put simply, Whitefield has too many "senior" firefighters and not enough young ones. Of the 33 active firefighters in all three Whitefield companies, only one-third are under thirty. Another problem is the number of firefighters available during working hours. Twenty-eight of Whitefield's active firefighters work out of town, although some work nearby and are able to respond to fires in Whitefield during normal working hours.

In 2003-04, Whitefield's budget allocated \$71,365 for fire protection, a figure which amounts to about 1.6% of the Town's total appropriation. This included allocations of \$13,000 to each of the three fire companies, \$15,385 for a new truck loan, \$5,000 for personal protective gear replacement, \$8,500 for the purchase of new air packs, and other miscellaneous expenses. In their partnership with the Town, the CMVFD Association contributed \$41,000 between 2000 and 2003 from their fundraising events to enhance the fire protection of the residents of Whitefield without affecting the tax burden (payments on Engine 5 and land purchase for site of future station).

#### Whitefield Ambulance Service

This service is provided by Delta Ambulance of Augusta, which is contacted through 911.

#### Emergency first response service

This is provided by the Town of Whitefield through Whitefield Rescue, a Town organization under the direction of the Selectmen and the Fire Chief/Civil Defense Director. Currently ten volunteers—one paramedic; two Intermediate EMTs; seven Basic EMTs – responding with Delta Ambulance, which is the authorized transportation organization, provide first-response emergency medical care. By mutual agreement, Whitefield Rescue responds to medical emergencies in Windsor and Somerville if needed. Whitefield Rescue's truck (standard size ambulance vehicle) responds to all emergency medical calls and most fire calls. Whitefield rescue is contacted at 911.

### **Public Facilities**

Whitefield has two public wells. One is located at the school and the other is located at the Town Office. The rest of the community gets its potable water from private wells.

1. TOWN-OWNED LAND (from tax maps and tax-exempt property listing)

- 8 acres on the Townhouse road (tax map/page 13/47) containing the Town House and Town Office, a small storage building, the Veterans Memorial, the salt/sand shed, and the recycling building;
- 8.3 acres on Grand Army Road/Route 126 (tax map 13/50) containing the Whitefield School, playground, athletic fields;
- 17.5 acres Fox Farm Lane, with frontage on the West Branch of the Sheepscot River (tax map 20/11) a portion of which lies in the town of Windsor. The voters at the March 2004 Town Meeting authorized the Whitefield Lions Club to conduct a feasibility study for developing a multi-community recreation area on this parcel;
- 1/3 acre (tax map 17/20) between the Howe Road and the West Branch of the Sheepscot River.
- 4.8 acres (tax map 13/53) on the Townhouse Road, adjacent to the Town House/Town Office.

2. TOWN-MAINTAINED CEMETERIES (from maintenance list at Town Office)

- Gardiner: Route 218 north, by Senott Road
- Cookson: Route 218 north, left ½ mile from Senott Road
- Preble: Hunt's meadow Road, north right off Cooper Road
- Brookings: Hunts Meadow Road, south towards Pittston, left
- Noyes: Hilton Road, left one mile
- Choate: Route 126 toward Jefferson, right
- Turner-Newell: Route 218 behind fire dept, on hill
- Ware: Route 218 Whitefield across from Bradford HS
- Sweat: Townhouse Road, one mile, left 100 yards
- Northy: Howe Road right from Vigue Road

3. TOWN-OWNED STRUCTURES

The Town House

*Location:* Townhouse Road, North Whitefield;

*Type/construction:* Wood frame;

*Facilities:* Original Town House moved to present location and town office added in 1989;

*Age:* Original Town House built in 1843;

*Size:* 42' x 32'.

*Condition:* Original building has been refurbished: handicap accessible ramp added; attic insulated, interior storm windows added; shingles replaced on north wall; side and exterior



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painted; all windows repainted and re-glazed; outer doors replaced; Kings Mills and Coopers Mills Post Office Windows and boxes installed; town office added underneath.

*Primary purpose:* Town Office;

*Uses:* Whitefield Historical Society, town's polling place; town offices;

*Special features:* Historic building;

*Adequate for current use:* town office space inadequate;

*Adequate for future use:* town office space inadequate;

*Renovation or repairs needed:* None.

### Whitefield School

*Location:* Route 126, North Whitefield;

*Type/construction:* cement block and wood frame;

*Facilities:* classrooms for K-8, library, gymnasium with stage, cafeteria, kitchen, music room;

*Age:* Built in 1956, addition in 1970, addition in 1988 (gym, etc.);

*Capacity:* Approximately 320 students; gym est., 500 persons;

*Condition:* fair;

*Primary purpose:* Elementary school;

*Uses:* Town meeting, civic meetings, fundraising suppers/events;

*Users:* Fire department, Athletic Associations, PTS, School Board, other civic groups, boards, commissions;

*Special features:* large gymnasium and stage with adjacent kitchen facilities;

*Adequacy for current use:* Building is adequate for current use;

*Adequacy for future use:* Depends on size of student body. Portable classroom(s) may be needed if student population increases;

*Renovation or repairs needed:* Gymnasium needs floor repair, parking lot improvements needed, main building roof replacement, wall extension to meet code, sprinkler system, fixture upgrade to meet ADA requirements, roof restructuring.

### Salt & Sand Shed:

*Location:* Townhouse Road, North Whitefield, behind town office

*Type/construction:* wood frame, corrugated metal covering

*Facilities:* Quonset style building with paved floor

*Age:* built 1990

*Size:* 4,000 yard capacity

*Condition:* Good

*Primary purpose:* storage of town's road sand and salt

*Users:* Town

*Special features:* cement side walls four feet high and paved floor to contain salt

*Adequate for current use:* Yes

*Adequate for future use:* Yes

*Renovation or repairs needed:* None

### Recycling Building

*Location:* vicinity of Salt/Sand shed

## Proposed

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*Type/construction:* wood frame on concrete slab, vinyl siding

*Facilities:*

*Age:* built in 1998

*Size:* 24' x 32'

*Condition:* good

*Primary purpose:* receptacles for glass and metal to be recycled, storage of other recycled items

*Adequate for current use:* Yes.

*Adequate for future use:* Yes

*Renovation or repairs needed:* Painting of trim not completed.

### Storage Shed

*Name of building:* storage shed

*Location:* across entrance road from the Town House

*Type/construction:* wood frame, shingled

*Age:* 1843 former privy of original Townhouse; moved to present site early 1990's

*Size:* 12' x 16'

*Condition:* Has been re-roofed, re-shingled and windows replaced.

*Uses:* storage for Historical Society items too large for the Town House.

*Adequate for current use:* Yes

*Adequate for future use:* Yes

*Renovation/repairs needed:* may need to be stained/painted

### Coopers Mills Dam (from Trout Unlimited presentation)

*Location:* Sheepscot River, Coopers Mills

*Type/construction:* stone block and concrete, low head, run of river, DIF&W fishway

*Age:*

*Size:* 12' high, 185' long

*Condition:* undersized spillway; deteriorating concrete; cracks and fissures; leaks through dam; non-functioning, leaking gates; safety concerns (low hazard state rating)

*Uses:* dry hydrant for fire protection behind dam; dam apparently has no effect on water levels in Long Pond

*Adequate for current use:* leaking limits fishway to spring (alewife) passage

*Adequate for future use:*

*Renovation/repairs needed:* a proposal to repair and provide adequate fish passage or breach the dam is under discussion among town officials, Trout Unlimited, and the Sheepscot Watershed Commission.

### Bridge, South Hunts Meadow Road

*Location:* South Hunts Meadow Road, crossing West Branch Eastern River

*Type/Construction:* multiple culverts

*Condition:* signs of corrosion and section loss (DOT)

*Repair/Renovation/Replacement:* anticipate need for replacement within 10 years. Est. replacement cost >\$200,000

"Greene" Property

*Location:* Townhouse Road, North Whitefield, adjacent to Town House/Town Office

*Type:* New England, frame-style house with an enclosed porch and attached small barn

*Age:* 170 years

*Condition:* To be determined. Roof and exterior cosmetic repair needs evident.

Interior/structural condition unknown.

*Adequate for future Town use:* Unknown. Use(s) of the structure and property to be determined.

:

**Whitefield Library Services**

Whitefield does not have a public library.

In 1998, an attempt to gain approval of the use of town revenues to fund the use of the Whitefield School Library as a public library was defeated at town meeting. In 2001 the Town voted to pay Gardiner Library for Whitefield citizens to use the Gardiner Library. The contract was not renewed in 2002 when the fee assessed reflected increased use by Whitefield citizens and the bill increased substantially over the first year introductory rate.

There are six public libraries located in "service centers" that are within reasonable driving distances for Whitefield residents: the Maine State Library (Augusta); Lithgow Library (Augusta); the Gardiner Public Library; Hallowell Library and the Wiscasset Library, and Skidompha Library (Damariscotta)

**Whitefield Elementary School**

Whitefield provides public education at the Whitefield Elementary School (K-8) and tuitions all its high school students to a number of area high schools. Education is the primary public service provided by our town's government. The State of Maine offsets approximately 48% of this funding. The rest of the money was raised through property taxes, excise taxes, and other revenue sources.

**Table 6.4. Whitefield School Budgeted Expenditures**

Year	1993	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Elementary	\$693,732	\$638,939	\$684,945	\$785,735	\$880,294	\$921,903
Secondary	\$591,233	\$800,611	\$906,240	\$921,700	\$906,180	\$933,850
Special Ed	\$256,194	\$575,030	\$600,017	\$728,913	\$697,980	\$887,602
Health Services	\$8,226	\$8,164	\$8,892	\$9,190	\$12,634	\$13,044
Improvement	\$10,000	\$5,625	\$6,625	\$7,125	\$7,125	\$8,125
Library	\$35,147	\$30,982	\$35,871	\$50,417	\$54,348	\$58,347
School Comm.	\$8,085	\$8,452	\$12,646	\$11,251	\$9,343	\$14,837
Superintendent	\$53,992	\$61,029	\$61,632	\$68,967	\$85,603	\$87,845
Principal	\$84,387	\$100,039	\$107,783	\$119,937	\$125,139	\$131,098
Ops. and Maint.	\$144,153	\$141,410	\$192,241	\$206,966	\$192,656	\$186,077
Transportation	\$119,888	\$158,652	\$161,069	\$197,274	\$196,157	\$268,922
Other	\$2,175	\$6,059	\$8,299	\$16,420	\$16,420	\$16,610
Debt Service	\$180,310					
Food Service	\$26,165	\$1,000	\$96,183	\$101,866	\$102,046	\$101,335
Closing Union 51					\$5,654	
Other	\$1,100	\$6,454			\$37,500	\$10,000
Total	\$2,214,787	\$2,542,446	\$2,882,443	\$3,225,761	\$3,329,079	\$3,639,595

## Proposed

Source:

**Table 6.5. Whitefield School Funding**

	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Raised locally *	\$1,036,465	\$1,278,846	\$1,337,971	\$1,381,740	\$1,441,090
State Contribution	\$1,654,601	\$1,711,841	\$1,694,673	\$1,781,888	\$1,874,487
Total	\$2,682,066	\$2,990,687	\$3,032,644	\$3,163,620	\$3,315,577
% Local	39%	42.8%	44.1%	43.7%	43.5%

Source: School Budget Reports

Note: Locally-raised educational funding includes debt service. In 1993, State funding was at 52%. In 2004, State funding was at 43.5%. This difference can be attributed to the State funding formula that was originally based on property valuation, but has been changed to consider student count with local income added.

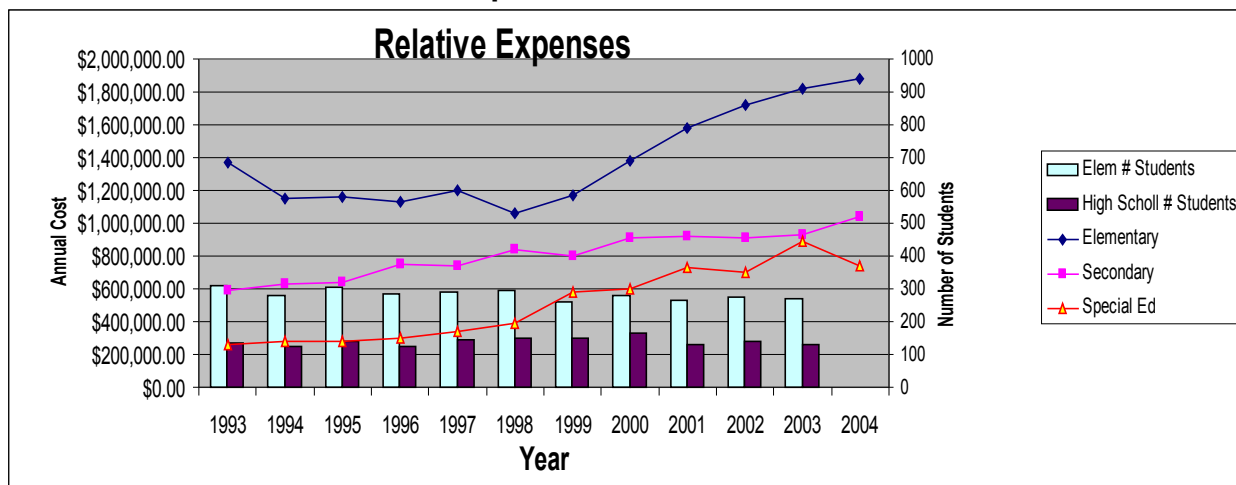
**FIGURE 6.2. Relative School Expenditures**

Figure 6.2. shows the growth in costs and number of students within the three major categories, elementary education, secondary education and special education. The graph demonstrates that the increases in both elementary and secondary populations have remained relatively constant over the last several years while costs have grown steadily. The costs have risen significantly: between 1988 and 2003: secondary education costs increased by 12%; elementary education by 62%; and special education by 130%. The cost data is based on budgeted costs as presented in the Whitefield School Budget documents for the respective years. The elementary costs included all costs associated with operation and maintenance of the school building, library, food service and transportation costs. It is noted that the cost of the special education transportation contracts has more than doubled since 1988 and has constituted between 20 – 30% of the total transportation budget over the last four years. Thus, if the special education transportation contracts were funded out of the special education budget instead of the elementary budget, the rate of growth of elementary budgets would be significantly lower, approximately 30% instead of 62%.

Total enrollment is 243 students in grades K - 8. Enrollments have been relatively stable

in the last decade. Projections suggest that future enrollments will increase, especially as residential development continues and younger families are attracted to our relatively inexpensive housing. The school is at capacity now.

The school has 16 classrooms, a gymnasium/cafeteria, and five special program rooms. There is also a playground and athletic field. The building is in average condition for a central structure 45 years old with two sections added over the years. It is in need of ongoing capital improvements. The gym roof has recently been replaced. A chlorination system was installed in 2003 to correct occasional problems with the drinking water. Presently work is underway to correct problems with the gym floor.

**Table 6.6. Whitefield School Population 2001-2005**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Elementary</i>	<i>Secondary</i>	<i>Other Schools</i>	<i>Total</i>
2000-2001	269	132	31	432
2001-2002	275	141	32	448
2002-2003	274	132	46	452
2003-2004	276	126	43	445
2004-2005	249	139	43	431

Source: School Budgets and Superintendent's Reports in Annual Report

In the past several years there has been a flurry of education-related activity at the state and federal levels, outside of Whitefield's control, which affects Whitefield, the Whitefield school, and Whitefield's students and teachers.

1997 saw the adoption of the Maine Learning Results (MLR) as the Maine standard of education excellence. Subsequently, the Maine Educational Assessment (MEA) test was changed to better measure the academic success of Maine's 4<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students in meeting the expectations of MRL.

In 2001, the federal No Child Left Behind law (NCLB) was enacted. Vastly simplified, this act requires each school to show "adequate yearly progress" for all of its students, at every grade level. Standards to measure progress are set by the State.

On top of this, the 2003 Maine Legislature adopted "An Act to Implement School Funding Based on Essential Programs and Services." This law suggests student/teacher ratios, the number of librarians, media specialists, etc. that the state will fund. The funding formula will be based on the school's essential programs and services. This law, which goes into effect for the 2005-2006 school year, may have a significant impact on Whitefield's future school. It is uncertain how this will affect Whitefield's State funding as the formula has not been set yet.

State funding in 1993 was at 52% while funding for the 2003 school year was 42%. It was originally based on property valuation and has been changed to consider student count along with local income.

School Union 132 separated from School Union 51 in 2002 with a three-year sunset

## Proposed

provision. We went from a six-town union to a three-town union. This means we share administration costs with Jefferson and Chelsea, but facility, curricula, and funding decisions are made at our Town Meeting. We have found that the smaller union provides better assistance with curriculum as well as business issues. In 2004 the Education Commissioner agreed that the smaller union was an improvement and signed a letter creating School Union 132 as an independent union indefinitely.

In 2000 - 2001 the town considered consolidating with other nearby towns to provide a new middle school with \$10,000,000 of state funding assistance. The project was turned down. In 2002, the school committee briefly considered narrowing the choice for high school in order to save money and minimize the curriculum issues involved with sending students to different schools. There was little support in town for such a move.

### Medical Facilities

Whitefield is fortunate to have access to medical facilities in town. The Sheepscot Valley Health Center (SVHC) in Coopers Mills village provides medical services for 5,100 clients a year drawn from all the surrounding towns. Services provided by SVHC include two family practitioner MDs, who also deliver babies, two osteopathic physicians, a nurse practitioner, a physicians assistant, a nurse practitioner as well as support staff. The Health Center also provides access to a visiting psychologist and a licensed clinical social worker. SVHC is looking for a new part-time podiatrist. Alcoholics Anonymous and WIC both meet regularly at SVHC.

The health center is short of both practice space and parking and is landlocked. The health center's board is considering options for expansion or relocation.

**Table 6.7 Draft Major Capital Improvement Plan**

action	est. date	est. cost	funding source
construct new town office/community center, etc.	2010?	\$500K-1M	Town bond, state grant, other grants
replace bridge on S. Hunts Meadow Road over W. Branch Eastern River	w/i 10yrs	\$200K	Town
repair or remove Coopers Mills dam	2006-07	n/a	Private, federal
develop Fox Farm Lane property for recreation	2006	n/a	grants
new Coopers Mills fire house	2006?	\$3-400K	CM association
new Whitefield fire house	2010?	\$500K	Town bond, Town secured loan, Whitefield association
new fire truck(s)	2014?	\$270K	Town, federal grant
school parking lot	2005-06	\$35K	In budget
school roof replacement	w/i 5-10 yrs	n/a	Town/State
school sprinkler system	w/i 5-10 yrs	\$230K	Town/State
school walls to roof to meet code	w/i 5 yrs	\$10K	Town/State

## Proposed

school gym floor	2005	\$40K	purchased, awaiting installation
school roof restructure	w/i 5-10 yrs	\$12K	Town/State
school bus replacement	10 year		Town

**Issues and Implications**

1. The town office space is inadequate for the amount of business conducted and for the safe and proper care and storage of historical records. The Town has recently purchased 4.8 acres and a structure adjacent to the town office.

2. There is need for adequate and comfortable space for meetings of boards and commissions.

3. The Town's water supply (Town Office and school) was found to contain bacteria and may need treatment before drinking or another source developed.

4. Anadromous fish passage at the Town-owned Coopers Mills Dam is ineffective due to the dam's poor condition.

5. Whitefield School

A. K-8 Student performance has been at or slightly above state average for the last 4 years. Adequate yearly progress needs to continue as the state averages continue to rise. The performance of Whitefield secondary school students is not currently tracked.

B. The ability to provide a Pre-Kindergarten is non-existent but will become important in the future. Full day kindergarten is contingent on enrollment numbers.

C. There is currently little to no extended day or summer school for students requiring remedial education.

D. Art, Foreign Language and Career programs are non-existent but will be required by Learning Results in the future.

E. Programs for Music, Physical Education and Guidance are lacking in time and will not meet the Learning Results expectations.

F. The school needs capital improvements and additional space will be required if all essential programs and services are implemented and/or attendance increases.

G. School operating costs continue to rise. Health insurance, salaries, and special education are the areas of biggest increases.

H. Equipment needs to be replaced at regular intervals or for catastrophic failure. Buses have a life span of 10 years. Technology equipment becomes outdated very quickly.

## Proposed

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I. The school must deal with major issues (drugs, alcohol, firearms, violence, etc.) as they occur within the school system.

j. Whitefield needs to be competitive in the hiring of teachers to ensure the school gets highly qualified and motivated teachers. Salaries are currently slightly below the state average.

K. Although Whitefield splits the costs of the Superintendent's office with Jefferson and Chelsea, the cost of renting a Union office also increases the budget.

L. There is currently no transportation for secondary school children from Whitefield. They are dependent on buses that some high schools provide and for rides from relatives and friends. School bus availability may change with time as finances become strapped in the various school districts. Lack of transportation is also a factor in students dropping out of school.

7. Whitefield may be required to address the disposal of hazardous materials.

### 8. Fire Department

A. The geography of the town, running some 15 miles from north to south but with only three river crossings, could pose problems for emergency services times if the number of stations was reduced.

B. Converting from three distinct, volunteer fire associations to a single municipal function would lead to some efficiencies and improved coordination between stations but doing so would also add a significant tax burden to the town with the loss of the association's fundraising efforts.

C. The cost of fire apparatus dictates that the town should develop a long-range apparatus replacement program which plans sequential replacement of the oldest equipment so that equipment can pass the NFPA standards.

D. The fire service should seek to upgrade the town's Insurance Standard's Organization (ISO) rating that would result in lowering of personal and business insurance policies

E. Recruitment, training, and retention of volunteer firefighters are huge problems for Whitefield. This is driven in part by state and federal OSHA regulations, and NFPA standards all intended to protect the health and safety of fulltime and volunteer firefighters but which add to the amount of time required to fulfill the requirements.

9. Whitefield Rescue needs to grow in number of volunteers, upgrading the proficiency levels of the volunteers, upgrading equipment and providing housing for apparatus and equipment.

10. 2009 is the bicentennial year for Whitefield. A warrant article was passed in 2004 to start a fund to pay for a celebration.





## **A-7. Recreation Resources**

### **Parks and Recreation Resources**

Residents of our town have access to a wide variety of public and private recreational resources. This section inventories these resources and addresses how changes in the community could impact their availability.

### **Public Recreation Resources**

Most of our town's publicly-owned recreation resources are located at the Whitefield Elementary School. [Appendix B-10 Map, "Town-Owned land"] The school has ball fields that are open to the public, including a baseball diamond and a general-purpose field. A playground and an outdoor basketball court are adjacent to these fields. The school gymnasium is available for public recreation when the facility is not being used by the school. The gymnasium has a theater stage, basketball courts, bleachers, and equipment for other forms of indoor recreation.

Other town-owned recreation areas include the Coopers Mills Dam and a small parcel on the West Branch of the Sheepscot River on the Howe Road. These two parcels offer some access to portions of the Sheepscot River for swimming, fishing, and boating.

In addition, our town was deeded a piece of river frontage containing 17.5 acres ("Olsen property") on the town line in Windsor (off of Route 17). A condition of the gift requires that the land be used for public recreation. The Lion's Club is currently working on a plan for developing that area into a recreation facility.

The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife owns and maintains a public boat launching site on Clary Lake. While the launching site itself is in the neighboring town of Jefferson, Clary Lake is largely in Whitefield. The Maine Department of Conservation owns and maintains Damariscotta Lake State Park on Damariscotta Lake in Jefferson. This 17 acre facility has a sandy beach, lifeguard, large shelter, playing field, and playground. The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife owns and maintains a public boat launching site on Damariscotta Lake as well.

The Sheepscot River through Whitefield and Alna, provides well-known canoe trips that are listed in numerous canoeing guides. The section from the Route 126 bridge to the dam at Kings Mills is mostly flat water with some sort stretches of easy rapids. From below the dam in Kings Mills to the Head Tide Dam (Alna) the river contains more rapids and is a popular early spring white water experience for canoeists and kayakers.. Guides such as the AMC Canoe guide and the DeLorme's Maine Gazetteer list the Sheepscot River as an excellent canoe trip.

### **Private Recreation Resources**

Whitefield relies heavily on private recreation facilities to meet the needs of our community. As a rural town, most residents have their own yards and don't need to rely on public parks for recreation. More importantly, our town has a long tradition of public access across private lands for hunting, skiing, horseback riding, and walking. This tradition makes much of privately-owned, undeveloped areas in town an enormous

## Proposed

recreation resource, and has been an important part of our heritage. Landowners often allow neighbors access to the rivers, ponds, and Clary Lake for fishing, swimming, boating and skating.

Our local snowmobile club, The Windsor/Whitefield/Jefferson Snowmobile Club (WJW), maintains a network of snowmobile trails that run across private lands in town. Registration fees for these recreation vehicles are collected by the town and sent to the State. Since excise tax is not collected by the town on snowmobiles, a small portion (\$5.85) of each registration fee is returned to the Town of Whitefield and has traditionally been given to the club to assist in trail maintenance. The club works with local landowners to get permission to use the trails for snowmobiles. The club's main trail runs along the old narrow gauge railroad bed and it is also used by cross country skiers and snowshoers.

All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) are not allowed to use the snowmobile club's trails, but their increasing use on private property is becoming a larger issue in the community. Recently-enacted state legislation strengthening the regulation of ATV use should help address some of the landowners' concerns).

As our community grows and changes, the traditional access that the public has enjoyed to private land will be threatened. As our town gets larger, the demand for recreation opportunities could surpasses a landowner's level of comfort, thereby threatening the public's access to that land. As properties change hands, new landowners may not choose to recognize the access that residents have traditionally enjoyed. Finally, the subdivision of larger parcels for development could interrupt the open spaces and trails that the public uses. All of these scenarios could threaten the public's access to the town's largest recreation resource.

Finally, our town has several private recreation facilities that it can use. A nine-hole golf course has been developed in Kings Mills and a Karate School has recently opened in town. There is a much wider range of recreation facilities available in the region that residents can access.

### Comparison with Other Small Towns

Our town's recreation resources are generally smaller than other small towns in Maine (Table 7.1.). A comparison of Whitefield's public and private recreational facilities with those in other small towns in Maine is given in the chart below.

**Table 7.1. Whitefield Recreation Comparison**

Activity	Small Town Average	Whitefield, publicly-owned	Whitefield, privately-owned
Parks (acreage)	25.6	18.5	
Baseball fields	1.13	1	
Softball fields	1	0	
Multiuise fields	1	1	
Basketball courts	1	2	
Picnic tables	6.3	0	
Swimming pools (sq ft)	1,983	0	Many river and lake access points

## Proposed

Playgrounds	1.4	1	
Boat ramp (spaces)	11	0	Many river and lake access points
Nature trails (miles)	0.78	0	2.0 (Sheepscot Valley Con. Assoc.)
Winter trails* (miles)	2.8	0	36.0 (Snowmobile Club)
Ice skating (sq ft)	6,800	0	Many river and lake access points

Source: Chelsea Comprehensive Plan (May 2003), Town of Whitefield

\* for cross country skiing and snowmobiling

### Recreation Related Licenses and Permits

Records of various recreation-related licenses and permits suggest that the demands on the town's recreation resources are changing (Table 7.2.). Between 1993 and 2003, the number of hunting and fishing permits for our town's residents has dropped from 643 to 423. At the same time, the number of recreation vehicle licenses appears to be increasing. Licenses for ATVs, boats, and snowmobiles have all increased.

**Table 7.2. Recreation Related Licenses and Permits**

	1993	1996	2000	2003
Hunting/fishing	643	636	495	423
Junior hunting	52	51	54	52
All Terrain Vehicle	n/a	n/a	100	123
Boat	n/a	n/a	154	173
Snowmobile	n/a	n/a	74	143

n/a - Not available

Note: Hunting/fishing licenses could be obtained only in town of residence before 1996.

Although numbers of hunting/fishing licenses no longer reflect all residents who have licenses (they can now purchase licenses at other locations or hold life-time licenses) there is a pattern of a decrease in hunting/fishing licenses and an increase in recreational vehicle licenses. These changing patterns of recreational use from the more traditional hunting and fishing to recreational vehicles may continue to create tension between users and landowners.

### Sheepscot Valley Conservation Association

The Sheepscot Valley Conservation Association (SVCA) is a regional nonprofit organization whose goal is to protect the natural resources of the 320 square mile Sheepscot River watershed. In addition to several conservation easements throughout Whitefield, the organization owns and manages the Whitefield Salmon Preserve. This preserve is open to the public and has two miles of hiking trails on its 56 acres provides access for fishing and hunting. The preserve is located off of the Howe Road and has an off-street parking area for visitors.

### Whitefield Athletic Association

The recreational needs of children and youth outside of school programs are met by the Whitefield Athletic Association. The WAA sponsors and supports sports for children from kindergarten to eighth grade, including soccer, T-ball, softball, baseball and basketball, using the school playing fields which they help to maintain. The school playground is available to individuals when not in use by the students. Boy Scout, Brownie, and 4H Groups are active in town. Activities directed by the Youth Pastor at the recently erected Youth Center at the Calvary Baptist Church are also open to the public.

**Issues and Implications**

1. Our town relies on a broad mix of both public and private recreation resources. High-intensity recreation areas (ball-fields, gymnasiums, etc) tend to be publicly owned, while lower-intensity recreation areas (hiking, hunting, etc) tend to be privately owned.
2. As our town grows and becomes more suburban, the demand for higher-intensity recreation areas will likely increase. The resources currently available are limited and could be overwhelmed in the future.
3. The use of ATV's on private land is an issue.
4. Continued access to the community's privately owned resources depends on the generosity of landowners and responsible use by the public. This access has been observed as tradition, but is not guaranteed in the future. Table 7.1. illustrates the high reliance that our residents have on private landowners for public access to hiking, hunting, skiing, sledding, skating, snowmobiling and canoeing. Despite Maine's strong tradition of public access on private land, the growing and changing community makes it important that the community considers ways to ensure the availability of these private resources for the future.
5. Some public access points to the Sheepscot River are available or are being developed. But there remain relatively few access points to our town's water resources that are currently under utilized and are a major feature of our town. The town should consider creating a more established network of water access points to our rivers , lakes, and ponds to make this resource more widely available. Route 126 improvements in 2004 include parking areas beside the river and stream crossings.
6. Walking, biking, and running on town roads is becoming more dangerous as both the volume and speed of the traffic increases. Developing bike/walk lanes on the roads and paths such as along the Sheepscot River may be an alternative. Table 7.1. identifies the absence of facilities for biking, picnicking and enjoyment of scenic areas in our town. Limited parking for those seeking access to the Sheepscot River and other recreational areas results in haphazard parking patterns which are dangerous to the parked vehicles and their occupants as well as to the road traffic. Some attention needs to be focused on this problem.
7. The Town of Whitefield returns all of its funds from snowmobile registrations to the local snowmobile club. The club then uses these funds to help maintain its trail network. The Town may want to work more closely with the snowmobile club to track these funds and identify other recreation opportunities that might exist.
8. The Wiscasset, Waterville, Farmington Railroad out of Alna is looking to expand their track north and this may impact the use of the old narrow gauge railbed as a trail.
9. What will be lost by projected growth and should it be prevented?

## **A-8. Culture**

The change in demographics and life styles of the last 30 years has brought changes to the cultural landscape of Whitefield. While the three villages are still a physical reality, the strong cultural identities of their residents, centered on social activities sponsored by the respective fire departments, churches and social clubs have been diluted.

Many opportunities are available outside of the town. Places such as Augusta, Gardiner, Hallowell, Waterville, and other towns of central and mid-coast Maine, with their movies, theatre, libraries, beaches, concerts, museums, gymnasiums, swimming pools, hiking trails, sporting events, etc. provide the major source of cultural and recreational facilities for Whitefield residents.

Nonetheless, there are several local events held every year which continue to promote social interaction and a sense of community. Among these are the Kings Mills Fire Department Fourth of July Celebration, the Whitefield Historical Society Memorial Day Exercises at the Veteran's Memorial Park, the Coopers Mills Fire Department Annual Auction, the Irish Picnic at St. Denis Church, the Christmas Tree Lighting at the Town House, the Educational Fair at the Whitefield Elementary School and, of course, town meeting. Local organizations, such as the Arlington Grange, the Lions Club, the Whitefield Historical Society and local churches, also host a number of activities which are open to the public, including suppers, lectures and auctions.

The town is also graced by the art work of its residents. Elementary students funded by the PTA and the Maine Humanities Council and directed by local artist Natasha Mayers completed the Painted Poles Project which has decorated a number of CMP poles with historic themes. The Heroes and Heroines Project created panels depicting the lives of people who have contributed to the town from its beginnings to the present. These are now on display at Uncas Farm and the Whitefield Post Office. In addition, local sculptor Roger Majorowitz has not only created a public sculpture garden across from his house on the Wiscasset Road in Kings Mills, but also the sculpture in front of the school and, done with students from the school, the cutouts on the face of the gymnasium building.

The influx of new residents has brought hidden benefits to the town by creating a culturally heterogeneous population of varied religious backgrounds and talents scattered throughout the town. Artists and farmers, musicians and mechanics, carpenters and lawyers, writers and electricians, doctors and herbalists, bakers and beer-makers, maple syrup producers and wood crafters live next door to each other. Many individuals carry on a variety of activities in order to make a living or as hobbies. Such a vibrant cultural mix bodes well for the town's future.

### **Community Organizations and Facilities**

The facilities available to the public in Whitefield are sparse. It is clear that the school provides the only really usable town-owned facilities and these are limited to those times when they are not needed for student activities. Other available facilities are provided by private, mostly non-profit organizations, run by volunteers and supported by dues and other fund-raising. Uncas Farms offers its meeting space to local groups (sometimes for

a fee) for discussions, art exhibitions, yoga classes, children's story hour, etc.

Many organizations provide charitable and philanthropic services to town residents. They deserve as much town support as possible to continue their valuable services to the town.

- ***The Whitefield Lions Club*** has been active since 1953. It has recently integrated its membership with the Lady Lionesses. Meetings are held at their "Den" on Main Street in Coopers Mills. Dedicated to serving the needs of the community, it annually provides scholarships to graduating high school students from the area, Christmas baskets to shut-ins, supports the Coopers Mills and Windsor Fire Departments, and contributes money to needy people, to fire victims and for other community purposes. It donated the Coopers Mills Union Church to the Sheepscot Valley Health Center and has generously supported the acquisition of the Kings Mills Diorama by the Historical Society. Besides annual dues, the Lions raise money at the Windsor fair, an annual Railroad Show and an auction.
- ***Arlington Grange*** is housed in an historic building built in 1885 by the Erskine Post of the Grand Army of the Republic on Grand Army Road. Chartered in 1914, it serves members from Whitefield and surrounding communities as the voice of the rural community in legislative affairs. It also is a support group for farm and other rural families. Meetings are held at their hall twice monthly during the summer and once a month during the winter. Membership is open to all. The Grange is supported by dues, public suppers and other activities. It has been instrumental in preserving the historic structure of the Grange Hall.
- ***Whitefield Historical Society*** has been active since 1976 in collecting and preserving artifacts and documents relating to the history of the town. In 1989, the society was appointed by the town as custodian for the 1843 Town House which now serves as its headquarters and which houses the archives. Membership is open to all and includes a subscription to its newsletter, "The Whitefield Historian." There are currently about 100 members. There are four general meetings a year. In addition to dues, the society raises money by the sale of books and postcards.
- ***Whitefield Senior Men*** have recently organized as a social group to share experiences and discuss any topic of interest except politics and religion. There is no formal organization and no dues. The group is especially interested in ideas to help the community. Their first project was fundraising to restore the Veterans Memorial "Honor Roll" at the corner of Town House Road and Pittston Road in Kings Mills. They raised enough to provide plaques for the Veterans Memorial Park at the town house, flags for the boy scouts and made a generous donation to the Historical Society for the acquisition of the Kings Mills diorama. The 14 members meet every Tuesday morning at the Country Farms Restaurant and guests are welcome.
- ***Whitefield-Jefferson-Windsor (WJW) Snowmobile Club*** maintains 36 miles of snowmobile trails in the tri-town area. Funded by the Snowmobile registration refund program, they encourage safe and proper use of snowmobiles.

- **Full Gospel Fellowship** in Kings Mills runs a food bank from its church at the corner of Town House and Pittston Roads.
- **Young at Heart Senior Citizens:** to be developed
- **Jefferson-Whitefield Extension Homemakers** is a chapter of the University of Maine Cooperative Extension Service. There are currently about 25 members, most of them from Jefferson. They are active in the community, promoting projects for both children and senior citizens that are supported by dues and fundraisers. Their projects include sending children to Camp Tanglewood every summer, donating to the music and art programs in both Jefferson and Whitefield Schools, and they help needy children who cannot afford to participate in extracurricular activities. An annual luncheon is held every year for the senior citizens and members are available to help seniors in other ways, such as driving them to appointments, etc. Meetings are held at members homes on rotation, where guests are invited to speak on practical, historical and cultural issues.

### **Issues and Implications**

1. Whitefield itself has few cultural facilities, and those that are available in our community are offered by private organizations. However, the number of facilities and activities available in the region is large.
2. There are no public programs targeting the social needs of senior citizens. As our town's population ages, it will become increasingly difficult for these residents to participate in activities that are far from home.
3. The lack of a public library limits the townspeople's access to programs and resources that a library could offer, including computer access and training. This is particularly restrictive to senior citizens and children who cannot drive themselves to out-of-town facilities.
4. The public school is the only publicly-owned facility in our town that is available for group activities (this space is only available when it is not needed for school activities).
5. There are several private organizations in Whitefield that have meeting spaces that can be used by the community.



## **A-9. Historical and Archaeological**

### **Historic Sites**

Sites are included in the list below that define, illustrate or authenticate social, political and economic events, people and culture, art and architecture, and settlement patterns which contributed to the evolution of the town and which we may want to keep from destruction . The following list is suggestive and may be modified as the work of evaluation progresses.

**Whitefield Historic Sites** [Appendix B-2 Map, "Churches, Cemeteries, Historic Buildings and Sites"]

#### **A. Sites to be Evaluated for Historical Significance**

1. Village centers, including the remnants of the mills around which the villages arose, the patterns of settlement in the villages and the structures which defined the village.
  - Kings Mills, including the mill owners' houses which surround the site and the route of the Railroad, sites of stores, schools and churches
  - North Whitefield: including the mill sites at Clary Lake and those on the south side of the Route 126 bridge, the houses which form the corner, churches, etc.
  - Coopers Mills, including the mill sites on both sides of Main Street, houses, stores school, etc.
2. Cemeteries (See Table 9.1, below)
3. Churches
  - St. Denis Church (1833) (North Whitefield)
  - Whitefield Union Church (Full Gospel Fellowship) 1887 (Kings Mills)
  - Coopers Mills Baptist Church (Sheepscot Valley Health Center) 1879 (Coopers Mills)
  - Calvary Baptist Church (North Whitefield)
  - Willing Workers Building (Plains; Wiscasset Road, private dwelling now)
4. Public or Private Social Meeting Locations
  - Arlington Grange Hall (GAR Hall) (1885) (North Whitefield)
  - Whitefield Union Hall (1900) (Kings Mills) (IN BAD CONDITION)
  - Whitefield Town House (1843) (North Whitefield)
  - One-Room School House (Lion's Den, Coopers Mills)
  - Cottage Hospital (Town House Road) (privately owned)
  - Bell School House in Kings Mills (privately owned)
5. Cattle Pounds (Rte. 126 across from St. Denis Church; Kings Mills, unknown location) 1834
6. Wiscasset, Waterville & Farmington Railroad (Sites of stations, roadbed)

## 7. Economic sites

- Jewett and other Granite Quarries
- Ball Limestone Kiln (1770s) (Weary Pond Road)
- Search for sites of stores, hotels, other businesses

## 8. Agricultural landscapes

- typical farm (Tibbetts? Uncas?) (Town House Road)
- extant barns
- Preble/Carleton House (Sabatine) connected farm house (1770/1805/1850s))

## 9. Dwelling Houses (others to be identified by a completed survey)

18<sup>th</sup> century

- Abraham Choate House (1784) Kings Mills
- Abraham Choate, Jr. House (1790) Hilton Road
- John Woodman House (1770s to 1802) (2 houses, tavern ) Wiscasset Road
- William Tobey House (1790) off Wiscasset Road
- Jonathan Heath House (1790s) Heath Road
- Houses in Hunts Meadow (Longfellow, Preble, etc )

19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century

- Chadborne House (Mills Road)
- Brick Houses (East River Road, Pittston Road, Head Tide Road, Kings Mills)
- Stone House (Field/Dunn), Vigue Road
- Avery house (?Hotel) North Whitefield
- Briggs Turner House (Grand Army Road)
- Many houses on every road

## 10. Historic Landscapes

- Weary Pond Area: Fowles Road, one of first roads, the main road to Jefferson: the first settlements were here, the Alarm Post, etc.
- Hunts Meadow Road: upper, early settlement
- East River Road: remains of original plots in the landscape
- Town House Road
- Sheepscot River, small mill sites, etc.

## B. Possible historical archeological sites

- Site of First Baptist Church
- Foundation of first John Woodman House
- Site of St. Denis Rectory (listed on the National Register of Historic Places)
- Cattle Pound (North Whitefield)
- James Loughery Home foundation: identified by MHPC
- Cornelius Defley Home foundation: identified by MHPC

## C. Pre-historic Archeological Sites have not been identified in Whitefield.

## Proposed

**Table 9.1 Whitefield Cemeteries**

No.	NAME	LOCATION	No. Of Graves	Condition	Oldest grave
1	Woodman	Wiscasset Road, Rte. 218	10	poor	1799
2	Heath (John)	Wiscasset road (Rte. 218)	11	fair	1814
3	Kings Mills	Wiscasset road (Rte 218 )	many	good	1801
4	Russian	Wiscasset Road (Rte. 218)	3	poor	1962
5	Ware/Maple	East River Road (Rte 218)	22	good	1814
6	Preble (Jedediah)	East River road (Rte 218)	18	fair	1811
7	Town Farm	Town Farm Lane	0	invisible	?
8	Potter/Little	East River Road (Rte 218)	Field stones 0	invisible	?
9	Little	East River Road (Rte 218)	?2	invisible	?
10	Turner/Newell	East River Road (Rte 218)	15	poor	1829
11	Gardiner/Avery	Mills Road	15	good	1842
12	Brann	Mills Road	64	fair	1819
13	Tobey 1	Palmer Road	3	fair	1858
14	Tobey 2	Palmer Road	10	fair	1841
15	Matthews	Thayer Road	9	poor	1830
16	Palmer	Thayer road	Field stones 0	invisible	?
17	Richardson	Crocker Ave.	?2	invisible	?
18	Tarr	Alna Road (Rte 194)	?2	invisible	?
19	Fowles	Alna road (Rte 194)	2	poor	1836
20	Chisam	Hollywood Blvd. (Game Pre)	4	poor	1831
21	King	Heath Road	0	invisible	?
22	Heath (Jonathan)	Heath Road	0	invisible	?
23	Noyes	Hilton Road	80	good	1814
24	Choate	Jefferson Road (Rte 126)	35	good	1821
25	Dunton	Jefferson Road (Metcalf field)	Field Stone 2	fair	?
26	Moore	N. Fowles lane	8	poor	1844
27	R or RK	Jewett lane	Field Stones 2	poor	?
28	King (Rufus)	Town House road	0	invisible	?
29	Kinsell/Turner/King	Town House Road	0	invisible	?
30	Swett	Town House Road (Dexter)	98	good	1822
31	Northey	Howe road	23	fair	1829
32	Partridge	Doyle road	11	poor	1846
33	Edgecomb	Rte 17, Coopers Mills	1	poor	1861
34	Human	Main St. Coopers Mills	0	invisible	?
35	Howe	Main St. Coopers Mills	many	good	1844
36	St. Denis Churchyard	Grand Army Road (Rte 126)	200	fair	1819
37	St. Denis Calvary	Grand Army Road (Rte 126)	many	good	1844
38	Brookings	S. Hunts Meadow Road	15	fair	1839
39	Brookings/Blackman	Hunts Meadow Road	Field stones 25-30	poor	?
40	McKindsley	Hunts Meadow Road	Field stones	fair	?
41	Preble (James)	N. Hunts meadow Road	58	good	1838
42	Moody	N. Hunts Meadow Road	9	poor	1829
43	Blackman	N. Hunts Meadow Road	32	fair	1818

**Whitefield Historical Society**

The Whitefield Historical Society has been active since 1976 in collecting and preserving artifacts and documents relating to the history of the town. In 1989, the society was appointed by the town as custodian of the 1843 Town House that now serves as its headquarters and houses the archives. Membership is open to all and includes a subscription to the society's newsletter, "The Whitefield Historian." There are currently about 100 members. There are four general meetings a year. In addition to dues, the society raises money by the sale of books and postcards.

**Issue and Implications**

1. Increased development pressure poses a potential threat to historic sites and archeological resources (Table 1).
2. Of the 43 cemeteries identified by Palmer in 1977 (Table 2), only 10 are being maintained at the present time. About a dozen have all but disappeared. The remainder are restorable but will require some funding.
3. While town records are being gradually conserved and they are stored in a fireproof vault, the storage area is not automatically humidity controlled (humidity represents the greatest danger to leather bindings and linen-based papers after fire.) There is no inventory of the records stored in the town office. Since these records offer the only insight into the development of the town and its official policies, they are of great interest to town planners and other town committees, as well as to historians and interested townspeople. However, there are no written guidelines governing their public use, including those which by law can be used only after designated periods have elapsed.
4. Information about the historic sites, archeological resources and records is not readily available to residents.

## **A-10. Natural Resources**

### **Topography**

The Town of Whitefield covers 32,727 acres (or 51.1 square miles) in northwestern Lincoln County. The highest elevations in Whitefield are ridges running northeast-southwest and Jones Hill (368 feet above sea-level) in east-central Whitefield. Most of the Town is 100 to 250 feet above sea level. The Sheepscot River is the dominant natural feature in Whitefield running from Cooper Mills in the north through North Whitefield and Kings Mills into Alna. Where the Sheepscot runs into Alna, it is only 20 feet above sea level.

Most of the land in Whitefield has a slope of 15% or less, however, a significant amount of land immediately adjacent to the Sheepscot River has a slope in excess of 15%. Relatively flat areas that may be prone to drainage problems are scattered throughout the Town. The steeper slopes are found in the areas of higher elevation and along the Sheepscot and branches of the Eastern River. [Appendix B-3 Map, "Elevation and Natural Features"]

### **Surficial Geology**

Most of the unconsolidated sediments overlying the metamorphic bedrock (ledge) in Whitefield are the result of continental glaciation that ended in Maine about 10,000 years ago. As the glacier advanced, it deposited a mixture of clay, silt, sand, gravel, cobbles, and boulders, called "till", over the hard bedrock surface. Materials deposited since that time are found along streams and are known as "alluvium".

Most of Whitefield's sand and gravel resource was formed by melting glaciers and is located in a sinuous, fragmented ridge of sand and gravel ("esker") running from the north to the south end of town along the Sheepscot River. The stream that formed the esker appears to have flowed into what was then the sea near the south end of town, building the large, flat-topped delta that is now extensively mined for its valuable sand and gravel.

The surficial geology map [Appendix B-3 Map, "Soils"] shows the distribution of the different glacial sediments occurring in Whitefield. Although not evident from the map, Whitefield on a regional scale has a significant amount of sand and gravel. This material is important as aggregate, but also commonly stores good volumes of ground water and is a very important source of recharge to underlying bedrock aquifers.

Clay and silt marine sediments occur throughout the town except at the high elevations where they were never deposited or have since eroded away. Till is exposed at the higher elevations, where it is often only a veneer interspersed with numerous outcrops of bedrock. One of the most extensive exposures of till is the Crocker Hill area in the southwest corner of town; yet even here, the till averages only 10 feet in thickness.

### **SOILS**

Most of Whitefield has a soil cover in the range of 0 to 20 feet. This generally thin cover has important implications concerning land uses such as building foundations and

basements, installation of septic sewage systems, solid waste disposal facilities, and ground water resources. A thin soil cover provides a poor recharge medium for bedrock aquifers and provides less protection to ground water quality.

The ability of the soils to support different land uses varies considerably and many sections of town are not suitable for development. The Lincoln County Soil Survey classifies soil types and many of Whitefield soils are considered "hydric", having high water tables and wetland vegetation. Areas in southeastern and northwestern Whitefield have significant amount of land that is shallow to bedrock.

Along the Sheepscot River are soils that are either highly erodable, due in part to slope length and steepness as well as other characteristics. Both the Sheepscot and Chamberlain Brook have areas of clayey soils that do not drain well. Many of these areas lie within the Shoreland Zone.

Whitefield also has arable land that is considered prime farmland. [Appendix B-4 Map, "Landcover"]

### **Surficial Water Characteristics**

Rivers, lakes, and ponds fill the low areas of Whitefield's topography. The rivers, like the town's landscape in general, tend to have a strong northeast-southwest orientation. The lakes and ponds fill depressions left by the retreating glaciers.

Whitefield straddles the watersheds of four major rivers: the Kennebec watershed in the northwest, the Eastern watershed in the west, the Sheepscot throughout the town, and the Dyer to the east.

Clary Lake and Weary, Givens, and Joys Ponds are located in Whitefield. The lakes and ponds are relatively small, and only Clary Lake has scattered and light development along its shoreline.

Land use in the watersheds (drainage areas), including feeder brooks and streams, affect water quality. Erosion from driveways, road ditches, logging roads, and farm fields leads to the siltation of these water features. Silt particles carry nutrients which fertilize unwanted plant growth. Erosion is most likely to occur on slopes greater than 15% and where the soil is left bare for long periods of time.

Current water quality of the rivers, streams, lakes, and ponds is acceptable and meets the State's water quality classification goals. There are no major point discharges.

The Sheepscot and West Branch of the Sheepscot have recently been upgraded to "AA" classification by DEP (Table 1). Whitefield values the Sheepscot River for its critical/ecologic importance, scenic setting, anadromous and inland fisheries, canoe touring, and whitewater boating. The West Branch is valued for its anadromous fishery, and the Eastern for its anadromous fishery and undeveloped corridor.

## Proposed

**Table 10.1. Major Rivers and Streams**

Name	Watershed	Classification	Length (Total)	Length (Whitefield)
West Branch, Sheepscot River	Sheepscot	AA	21.0 mi.	2.0 mi.
Finn Brook	Sheepscot	A	3.5 mi.	3.5 mi.
Carlton Brook	Sheepscot	B	2.8 mi.	2.8 mi.
Dyer River	Sheepscot	B	N/A	N/A
Sheepscot River	Sheepscot	AA	34.0 mi.	12.0 mi.
East Branch of Eastern River	Kennebec	B	5.3 mi.	N/A
West Branch of Eastern River	Kennebec	B	6.2 mi.	N/A

Source: Maine Department of Environmental Protection

Note: **Class AA** shall be the highest classification and shall be applied to waters which are outstanding natural resources and which should be preserved because of their ecological, social, scenic, or recreational importance. Class AA waters must be of such quality that they are suitable for the designated uses of drinking water after disinfection, fishing, agriculture, recreation in and on the water, navigation and as habitat for fish and other aquatic life. The habitat must be characterized as free-flowing and natural.

**Class A** waters must be of such quality that they are suitable for the designated uses of drinking water after disinfection; fishing; agriculture; recreation in and on the water; industrial process and cooling water supply; hydroelectric power generation, except as prohibited under Title 12, section 403; navigation; and as habitat for fish and other aquatic life. The habitat must be characterized as natural.

**Class B** waters must be of such quality that they are suitable for the designated uses of drinking water supply after treatment; fishing; agriculture; recreation in and on the water; industrial process and cooling water supply; hydroelectric power generation, except as prohibited under Title 12, section 403; navigation; and as habitat for fish and other aquatic life. The habitat must be characterized as unimpaired.

The rural character of Whitefield is reflected in significant stretches of shoreland that are undeveloped. Clary Lake is the only lake or pond in Town that is built-up, and the extent of shoreland development in this case is modest.

With the exception of the village areas that are located adjacent to the Sheepscot River, the amount of shoreland development immediately adjacent to rivers and streams is quite small.

Whitefield established a 300 foot wide Shoreland Zone in 1974 that exceeds the minimum 250 foot wide zone mandated by the State Legislature. [Appendix B-5 Map, "Shoreland Zones"]

**Table 10.2. Major Lakes and Ponds**

LAKE	Total Watershed Area (sq miles)	% of Watershed	Water Body (sq. miles)	Water Quality Classification
Pinkham Pond	0.35		0.08	moderate/ sensitive*
Whitefield		79.2%		
Chelsea		20.8%		
Lower Togus Pond	25.9		2.1	moderate/ sensitive*
Augusta		61.6%		
Chelsea		4.9%		
Whitefield		16.8%		
Windsor		26.8%		moderate/ sensitive*
Givens Pond	1.5		0.1	
Whitefield		100.0%		moderate/ sensitive*
Joys Pond	1.3		0.1	
Whitefield		60.8%		
Pittston		39.2%		moderate/ sensitive*
Weary Pond	1.3		0.2	
Whitefield		100.0%		moderate/ sensitive*
Little Dyer Pond	10.8		0.4	
Jefferson		46.5%		
Whitefield		53.5%		moderate/ stable
Clary Lake	19.5		2.8	
Jefferson		51.4%		
Whitefield		48.6%		moderate/ sensitive*
Kim Pond	5.1		0.2	
Jefferson		97.3%		
Whitefield		12.7%		

Source: Maine Department of Environmental Protection

Notes **Moderate/stable** - less clear (average visibility 10 to 20 ft.) but do not have summer algae blooms (minimum visibility > 6 ft.). Algae levels are moderate (chlorophyll 4 to 7 ug/l) as are phosphorus concentrations, 10 to 20 ppb. Despite their relatively high nutrient and algae levels, lakes in this category do not appear to be in high risk for developing algae blooms because of (1) high water color (<30 ppm), (2) consistently high summer oxygen levels in the metalimnion, and/or (3) very stable algae and moderate/sensitive nutrient levels with little seasonal variation.

**Moderate/sensitive** - exhibit similar clarity, algae and nutrient levels to the moderate/stable lakes, but have high potential for developing algae blooms (significant summertime depletion of dissolved oxygen). Many lakes fall into this category because of their high risk of significant water quality change with only a small increase in phosphorus concentration.

- classified Moderate/sensitive due little amount of information available

## Groundwater

Groundwater characteristics often reflect the character of the bedrock and surficial geology. As such, it is not surprising that groundwater characteristics in Whitefield vary considerably. Sensitivity to these variations is important since there are no centralized water supply systems in Whitefield; therefore, adequate water supply needs to be secured on an individual lot basis. Also, from a resource protection perspective, an understanding of the groundwater characteristics is necessary to recognize the vulnerability of the resource to different types of human activity.

A series of sand and gravel aquifers, which are defined by the Maine Geological Survey as being "significant", run along the Sheepscot River and are associated with the location of glacial eskers. These areas are important as drinking water supplies. At the same time, our understanding of the characteristics of this resource is limited and needs to be studied further. [Appendix B-7 Map, "Aquifers, Public Wells, Water Protection Buffers"]



There is a wide variation in the yield of bedrock wells in Whitefield. In some other areas, yields are in excess of 50 gallons per minute and in others the yield is not so good. Also, the quality of the water from bedrock wells varies. Some sections of town (e.g., along sections of Hunt's Meadow Road) have a mineral content that requires filtration before being used.

**Flood Plains**

Floodplain areas, those areas inundated with flood water due to a water body or watercourse overflowing its banks, are found throughout the Town of Whitefield. Fewer than five dwelling units are located within the 100 year floodplain area: There are 17 distinct 100 year floodplain areas in Whitefield.

**Wetlands**

Wetlands are valuable for a whole host of reasons; wildlife and fish habitat, flood flow, sediment retention, as well as recreational areas. The State Planning Office identifies 469 distinct wetland areas that cover in total six percent of the town. Thirty-seven of these areas are deemed to be of moderate importance when combining all the various factors. The Inland Fisheries and Wildlife studies identify 31 wetlands of wading bird and waterfowl importance. One of them is ranked high – the area from the Heath Road toward Town Farm Road – and eleven other areas of moderate importance. Shoreland Zones encompass about half of the high to moderate wetland areas plus some of the low. [Appendix B-7 Map, "Wetlands Related Habitat"]

**Wildlife and Fisheries**

The rivers, streams, and lakes of Whitefield are habitats for a wide variety of fish species including salmon, alewives, trout, bass, pickerel, and perch. In addition, the hills and dales of the town support a wide variety and an abundance of wildlife. Many wildlife species need unroaded areas free from human pressures to thrive. One of the largest such tracts in central Maine is the 10,000 acres that includes the Game Preserve in southwestern Whitefield and Jefferson. Four other relatively large unroaded areas are; Crocker Hill, land between Route 218 and the Heath Road, between Townhouse and Rooney Roads and between North Hunts Meadow and Devine Road. One large parcel of land on Crocker Hill is in Tree Growth and two parcels in N. Hunts Meadow/Devine Road area are also in Tree Growth. [Appendix-B8 Map, "MNAP Exemplary Communities, IF&W Rare Animal Occurrences, Atlantic Salmon Habitat, and USFWS Trust Species Habitat"]

The Game Preserve established by the State Legislature is located in the southeast corner of the Town. Hunting is prohibited in the area of the game preserve. The land itself is in private ownership, but despite its preserve status, there are no added restrictions to development of this land. The Preserve encompasses wetlands and deer wintering yards. Currently two large land parcels within the Game Preserve are in Tree Growth. [Appendix B-10 Map, "Town Owned Land, Conservation Properties & Tree Growth"]

The Maine Natural Heritage Program has documented a rare fresh water mussel, brook floater (*Alasimidonta varicosa*), living in the Sheepscot River, north of the Whitefield Cemetery and is found in only six other locations in the state. An exemplary species, a small aquatic plant, called threadfoot (*podostemum ceratophyllum*) lives along the

Sheepscot river in the same area. Protecting water quality is essential to preserving both these populations.

The Sheepscot River is one of eight rivers in Maine with genetically distinct, naturally reproducing Atlantic salmon populations. The Atlantic salmon was listed on the federal endangered species list in December of 2000. The salmon spawn and grow to juvenile size in fresh water, then migrate downstream to the ocean. Once the salmon have reached sexual maturity, they will return to the river of birth, migrating upstream to spawn. The Atlantic salmon will continue annually to return to the river to spawn. Fishing for this species in Maine rivers is now illegal.

The number of returning adults has declined to critical levels. As a result of the endangered species listing, many organizations are working to research the reason the population of adult salmon returning to the rivers of Maine has fallen to such low levels. Factors such as water quality, fish passage obstructions, nonnative species, inbreeding and overfishing at sea are being reviewed. The Sheepscot River in Whitefield contains a large amount of potential nesting and rearing habitat identified by US Fish & Wildlife Service as well as deep pools used by adult fish to survive the low flows during the summer.

Threats to the Atlantic salmon would be, primarily, deterioration of water quality and additional barriers to upstream migration. Water temperature and clarity are the primary conditions necessary for salmon spawning. Cold water temperatures can be maintained by vegetative cover of feeder streams and the main river. Siltation of the river, in particular the gravel spawning beds, must be avoided. Agricultural and highway runoff should not be directed into the river. The Sheepscot River Conservation Association owns one parcel and three easements along the river that will aid in protecting the resource.

Neighboring towns have rare animal occurrences whose habitat overlaps into Whitefield. These are the Woods Turtle in Alna on the southern border of Whitefield and the New England Bluet damselfly has been documented on the eastern end of Clary Lake in Jefferson. The Damselfly requires emergent vegetation along lake shores and open fields within 100m of the shore. [Appendix B-11 Map, "MNAP Exemplary Communities, ..."]

### **Scenic Resources**

Views of the Sheepscot river and fields along 218 and Townhouse Road and the shore from the river when canoeing/kayaking are the most often noted scenic areas in town. For information on scenic transportation routes through Whitefield, see the Transportation section.

### **Development Patterns**

Development in town consists primarily of single family homes on lots along roads. This is happening on main roads and on smaller side roads. There are concentrations of development in the "village" area of Coopers Mills, North Whitefield, and Kings Mills. Development on side roads can surprise people when upgrading (paving) of roads and new bus routes are requested.

**Agricultural Resources**

While agriculture has historically been a significant activity in Town, for many years there has been a steady decline in the amount of farmed land. Open space, including farmland and fields no longer utilized for farming, constitute 17% of Whitefield land cover. The decrease in the amount of land used for agricultural purposes is the result of the changing economics of farming and not due to development pressure. There is no town regulation of the use of agricultural resources. There are only a handful of full-time farmers and another dozen or so who derive part of their income from farming.

**Forest Resources**

The predominant land cover in Whitefield is forest with approximately 60% of the land forested. As such, trees are the most widespread natural resource in the Town. Over the past 10 years fewer than 500 acres are harvested annually and only 81 acres have been converted to other uses. There is very little land in Tree Growth Tax status due to the low valuation of undeveloped by the town.

**Sand and Gravel Resources**

Whitefield has extensive sand and gravel resources that have been subject to significant mining over the past fifty years. Interest in further exploitation of this natural resource has been increasing recently as sand and gravel resources in other communities have been exhausted. Interest in gravel mining in Whitefield is likely to continue and increase in the future. There are currently over two dozen gravel pits in town. Although the majority of these pits are under 5 acres in size there are also three large pits of over 20 acres.

Whitefield does regulate the mining of gravel through its Development Ordinance if the pits are over five acres in size.

**Issues and Implications**

1. Whitefield's soils vary widely across the community. Soils that are suitable for natural resource based uses are also prime soils for development. In general, soils along the town's waterways are not well-suited to development.
2. The quality of our town's lakes, ponds, and streams are generally very good. However, fragile soils, a large number of waterways bisecting Whitefield, and a rapidly changing pattern of land use could threaten the quality of these resources in the future. The town adopted a 300' Shoreland Zone buffer in 1974, and this buffer will help protect these fragile resources.
3. The Sheepscot River is one of eight rivers in Maine with genetically distinct, naturally reproducing Atlantic salmon populations. The Atlantic salmon was recently added to the federal list of Endangered Species. Threats to this species include declining water quality and barriers to upstream migration.
4. Whitefield has several large undeveloped blocks that support a wide variety of habitats. One block in southwestern Whitefield includes more than 10,000 acres and is one of the largest blocks in Central Maine.

5. Recent development in Whitefield has tended to spread along road corridors as opposed to development into the backland. Development along road corridors does not intrude on large blocks of habitat. However, as vacant land along roads becomes scarce, development into the backland will become more common.

6. Aquifers supply all of the drinking water in Whitefield. A large section of our community is underlain by sand and gravel aquifers that can be very productive as well as susceptible to pollution. Pollution of this resource could make the drinking water in certain areas of town unsafe for consumption. This is particularly a concern with gravel pit operations that are located throughout the community. Ensuring proper pit operation is paramount to protect our drinking water.

7. Whitefield does not belong to the Federal Flood Insurance Protection Program. This may become an issue in the future for those buildings within the flood plain.

## **A-11. Fiscal Capacity**

Understanding Whitefield's ability to fund projects and services is crucial when planning for the community's changing needs. This section examines Whitefield's fiscal capacity to fund new and existing programs and services.

### **Assessed Valuation, Commitment, Tax Rate**

Examining **assessed valuations** is one way to track the fiscal health of a community. Assessed valuations include all land and buildings as well as some personal property. A taxpayer pays taxes based on their proportional share of the town's assessed valuation. A rising valuation is a sign of fiscal strength – smaller tax rates are needed to raise a given sum of money.

In 2003-04, Whitefield's assessed valuation for real estate and personal property was \$80,882,518. A decade earlier in 1993, Whitefield's assessed valuation was \$59,300,000. Between 1993 and 2004, Whitefield's local assessed valuation increased by 36%.

This increasing valuation has been the direct result of improvements to land (new homes, buildings, additions, etc) and more taxable personal property in the community. The Town has never done a complete valuation, which means that many of these assessed valuations have been in effect for many years:

- \$12,000 for 1.5 acre developed base lot;
- \$6,000 undeveloped "base" lot;
- \$250/acre for raw additional land (the low per acre assessment for raw land is seen as preventing the property tax burden from forcing the sale of large parcels of undeveloped land – this category includes land with conservation easements);
- \$213/acre for softwood forest stands enrolled in the Tree Growth program;
- \$114/acre for mixed wood forest stands enrolled in the Tree Growth program;
- \$74/acre for hardwood forest stands enrolled in the Tree Growth program;
- \$1,800/acre for gravel pits requiring a town permit (>0.5 acre).

Whitefield's assessed valuations are determined by the Town's Board of Assessors (Selectmen). When improvements are made or when land is sold, the Board of Assessors should review the property to determine its new assessed value. Recent sales of Whitefield property show a rapid increase in value that is used by the State in its valuation.

While Whitefield has never done a complete valuation of the community, the Selectmen hired an assessor in 2002 to gather information on building size, quality of construction, and present condition for all structures in Whitefield. This task was completed in the

spring of 2005 and provides a documented, uniform, up-to-date basis for a more equitable municipal assessment of structures.

Updating these valuations for structures does not mean that there will be a tax increase for all taxpayers. A new valuation will reallocate property taxes so they will be more fairly distributed based on current market valuation.

**Local Commitment** is the amount of property taxes collected to fund local government. In 2003-04, local commitment totaled \$1,435,667. This was more than 65% higher than commitment in 1993.

Commitment increased modestly until 1997, when it increased dramatically by more than \$200,000. The major increase in expenditures during this budget year was a more than \$200,000 increase in the school budget.

The **Tax Rate** reflects how much of the assessed valuation is committed in property taxes each year. In 2004-05, Whitefield's tax rate was 18.5 mills. (A mill is the amount of property tax paid for each \$1,000 of assessed valuation.)

Since 1993, Whitefield's tax rate has increased from 13.02 mills to 18.5 ('04-'05) mills. Generally, the tax rate varied between 13 mills and 11.5 mills between 1993 and 1996. The tax rate jumped from 12.75 mills in 1996 to 15.5 mills in 1997. Since 1997, the tax rate has fluctuated between 15 mills and 17.75 mills.

Although Whitefield's tax rate has increased in the last decade, a comparison with neighboring communities suggests that Whitefield's tax rate is average. The Full-Value Tax Rate is used by the State to adjust for discrepancies in assessing techniques. Because educational aid, revenue sharing, and county taxes are based on the State's valuation, the State adjusts local assessed valuations based on real estate market activity within the community each year.

Whitefield's full-value tax rate in 2003 was 11.32 mills. This was lower than many surrounding communities: Alna (13.80); Pittston (13.10); Chelsea (15.34); Windsor (14.64); and Somerville (15.72) had higher full value rates, while Jefferson (9.68) was lower. Generally, towns with a large amount of seasonal housing (like Jefferson) tend to have lower full-value tax rates because there is more property to assess for a given year-round population. Also, full-value tax rates do not adjust for different levels of services – so larger communities that typically offer higher levels of service generally have higher full value tax rates.

The **Homestead Exemption** is a reduction in property taxes through a reduction in assessed valuation for permanent residents. This reduction is determined by the Board of Assessors from a range suggested by the Maine Bureau of Revenue Services. In 2003-2004, 464 Whitefield residents received a homestead reduction of \$5,950. The State reimburses the Town for 50% of the local tax income lost due to the Homestead Exemption.

In part to track new valuation in Whitefield, the Town requires that a **Notice to Build** form

be filed with the Selectmen. Compliance with the NTB is estimated at 75%.

## Revenue

In 2003-04, the Town of Whitefield received \$4,027,349 in revenue. This came from several sources. Nearly 60% of the revenues came from intergovernmental transfers, including state revenue sharing and school funding for the elementary school. More than 30% of the Town's revenues came from property tax commitment. Six percent of revenues came from excise taxes – or the taxes required for any motor-powered watercraft or any vehicle or trailer traveling on public roadways.

Between 1994 and 2004, the tax commitment increased by 85%. Excise taxes increased the most, growing by more than 144% in the same ten year period. A new computer system that tracks excise taxable values more accurately is responsible for most of this increase.

**Figure 11.1 Annual Revenue Sources and Valuation**

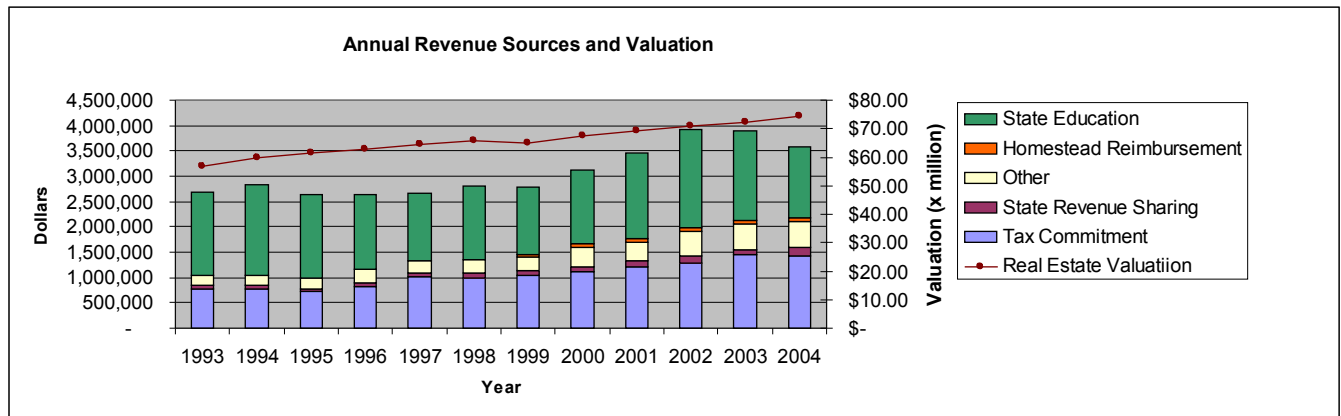


Figure 11.1. shows the annual revenue sources for the period 1993-2004. The property valuation upon which taxes are based has grown by 31% over this period. The category of "other" in the chart represents primarily income from excise taxes but also includes grants and money expended from "surplus". The role of excise taxes has been significant at holding the property tax rate down during the last several years. Excise taxes have grown from \$117,136 in 1993 to \$309,926 in 2004, an increase of 164%. Excise taxes over the last few years have contributed approximately 20% to Whitefield's locally generated revenues.

## Expenditures

Figure 11.2. shows the rate of growth of annual expenditures for Whitefield. The growth in education costs is shown by the shaded area and based on the scale of the right axis which has been set equal to ten times the scale of the left axis which is used as the reference for all municipal expenditures. The chart shows that three categories of expenditures have been held to very little growth since 1999, highways, other and insurance-protection while education and town administration have grown at

## Proposed

approximately the same rate. The fastest growing expenditure is the county tax which grew by 70% from 1999 to 2003, although it was somewhat lower in 2004.. It should be noted; however, that the 2004 budget authorized the purchase of a new fire truck which will result in a significant jump in expenditures for the insurance-protection line.

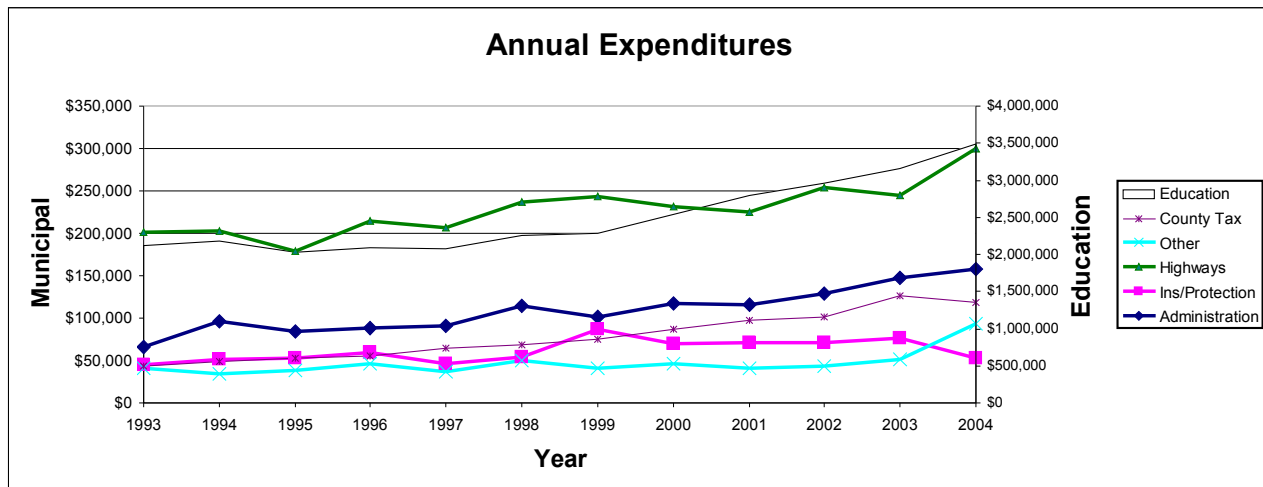
**Table 11.1. Selected Whitefield Expenditures (in thousands), 1999-2004**

	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Town Officers' Salaries	56.926	59.7	64.7	72.9	85.9	91.2
General Government	30.6	32.2	32.6	31.4	39.6	37.6
Town Office Operations	11.5	20.4	14.9	21.5	14.8	14.7
Snow and Ice	113.4	109.9	126.1	132.7	137.2	172
Town Roads	132.2	243.1	97.8	119.3	107.8	128
Fire Departments	36	36	36	39	39	39
Hatch Hill Landfill	20.2	20.2	20.2	23.8	23.9	23.9
School Budget (raised)	944.7	1,092.90	1,168.10	1,333	1,436	
Total Town Valuation	65,972	68,722	76,895	78,417	79,653	80,882
Tax Rate (mils)	15.7	16.2	15.7	16.2	18.15	17.75
Debt Service Payments	150.6	104.8	74.9	44.9	30.0	52.5*

\* Includes \$15,000 payment for new fire truck loan

Source: Town of Whitefield

**Figure 11.2 Annual Expenditures.**



### Issues and Implications

1. Whitefield's property tax burden is lower than that of the Augusta and coastal areas. This lower burden is a factor in our town's high rate of residential development.
2. Whitefield's valuation as a ratio of the State valuation has dropped from 81% in 1994 to 65% in 2004. This low ratio can be problematic for the Town because State law requires a "minimum assessment ratio" of 70% and can require that towns revalue once this ratio drops below 70%. Also, as some property valuations become outdated



(undervalued), some property owners are not being taxed their proportional amount and the taxes on other property owners grows.

3. Whitefield engaged a professional assessor to inspect, measure, and photograph all of the real estate property in our town, a task that was completed in the spring of 2005. The Board of Assessors has acquired a software-assessing program to assist in the recommendation of assessed valuations for all of the various real estate types and land schedules.

4. While Whitefield's property tax burden has been relatively stable, our excise taxes have grown by 164% between 1993 and 2004 and now contribute approximately 20% of the locally generated revenue. This increase was sparked by the acquisition of an excise tax computer program that more accurately tracks the market value of motorized vehicles.

5. The Town of Whitefield is financially very sound largely due to the retiring of long-term debt (the 2004 authorization to purchase a new fire truck represents the most significant borrowing in several years) and wise cash flow management. In accordance with recommendations from the State audit review process and Whitefield's financial auditors, the Town has implemented a review of revenues and expenditures on a monthly basis. Capital improvement planning and prudent borrowing should ensure that the Town's debt load or funding needs do not create large annual increases in property tax-raised revenue.

6. Whitefield's sound financial situation could be affected by a tax cap proposal that limits the tax rate. Increased valuation that lowers the mill rate would be insurance against a tax cap.

7. Whitefield has taken steps to ensure that all revenues are in Category 1 saving accounts, which means that all funds are either insured or collateralized by securities.

8. Municipal services in 2003-2004 accounted for approximately 29% of the local tax burden. Education expenses account for 65% of local taxes. The school budget is the largest factor in our annual tax burden, and our development pattern and changing demographics suggest that our education enrollments are going to grow in the future.

9. The fastest growing expense in recent years has been county taxes, which grew by 70% between 1999 and 2003.

10. Noncompliance with the Town's Notice to Build requirement hampers the Board of Assessors' ability to adjust property valuations in a timely and equitable manner. This means that existing landowners can end up paying a larger share of the town's property taxes bills until new construction is recognized and valued by the Board.

11. Undeveloped farm and woodland has been assessed at a modest rate in order to relieve landowners of a property tax burden that would encourage sales of open land.

## Appendix B—Maps

- B-1 Buildings in Whitefield: 1893-2001
- B-2 Churches, Cemeteries, Historic Buildings & Sites
- B-3 Soils
- B-4 Landcover
- B-5 Shoreland Zones
- B-6 Surface and Groundwater Issues
- B-7 Wetlands and Related Habitat & Deer Wintering Areas
- B-8 Elevation, Natural Features, Conserved Properties & Town-Owned Land
- B-9 MNAP Exemplary Communities, Rare Animal Occurrences
- B-10 Proposed “Village” & Business Development Preferred Use Areas